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Vol. 1

**THIRTEEN TRIVANDRUM PLAYS
ATTRIBUTED TO
BHĀSA**

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THIRTEEN TRIVANDRUM PLAYS
ATTRIBUTED TO
B H Ā S A

TRANSLATED INTO ENGLISH BY

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P R E F A C E

THIS Translation is of thirteen Sanskrit plays discovered in South India by the late Paṇḍit Gaṇapati Śāstrī and edited by him in the Trivandrum Sanskrit Series.

Neither in the first MS. found, which contains twelve of the plays and portion of another, nor in other MSS. which contain single plays, is the author's name recorded.

Paṇḍit Gaṇapati Śāstrī attributed all thirteen plays to Bhāsa, a famous dramatist earlier than Kālidāsa. Some verses are ascribed to Bhāsa by medieval anthologies, but only ten with unanimity. We are told that he composed a *Svapna-Vāsavadattam* (his best play), and that in another play the device of the wooden elephant was used. Characteristic features of his work are described by Bāṇa, and other poets evidently held him in high estimation. One or two verses from his plays are quoted by writers on poetics. Otherwise the text of Bhāsa's numerous plays had completely disappeared.

The learned editor of the Trivandrum plays found that they contained a *Svapna-Vāsavadattam* (the best play in the collection), and, in the *Pratijñā-Yaugandharāyaṇam*, a scene dealing with the wooden elephant. He noticed also certain peculiarities in the technique of the plays which he regarded as signs of antiquity.

All these points confirmed him in the opinion that Bhāsa was the author.

At first this conclusion was generally accepted both in India and in the West.

Later on doubts were expressed. It was found that some of the special features which had been regarded as evidence of an early date (prior to Kālidāsa) were not peculiar to these plays. They occur with some modifications in other South Indian MSS. of plays as late as the seventh century.

The verses ascribed to Bhāsa by the anthologies do not occur in the Trivandrum plays.

Hence the sceptical school doubted whether any of this collection had been written by Bhāsa at all.

This is not the place to discuss the evidence, let alone the arguments, in detail. Nevertheless the question is not without interest even for the general reader. If we place the historical Bhāsa in the second or third century A.D., and if we can accept this collection of plays as the authentic work of Bhāsa, then we have a piece of evidence of great importance for the history of literature and the manner of life it reflects. If, however, these plays are to be regarded as compositions of the seventh century or later their importance is considerably reduced.

Now the problem may be approached along the lines of three hypotheses.

- A. That all thirteen plays are the work of one writer, or at least of one period.
- B. That they were written by different authors, perhaps at different periods.
- C. That older material has been worked over, and to some extent worked up by a later hand.

A. Nearly all that has been written on the subject implies the first hypothesis. This is common to the most ardent supporters of the Bhāsa theory and to those who believe in the latest dates suggested. Dr. Sarup¹ has sought to link up eleven of the thirteen plays by their internal similarities. Now if this hypothesis be reasonable there is one important circumstance to be borne in mind. It can hardly be doubted by any one who has compared the two, line by line and word by word, that the *Daridra-Cārudattam* (incomplete as it is) is earlier than the *Mṛcchakaṭikam*.² Hence on this hypothesis all thirteen plays should be older than *The Little Clay Cart*.

Of course we do not know the date of *The Little Clay Cart*, but probably nobody will put it much later than the Gupta period.

¹ Introduction to *The Vision of Vāsavadattā*. The two plays without verbal resemblances are the *Dūtāghaṭṭakam* and the *Karṇabhāram*, both of them short. See also Dr. V. S. Sukthankar, *Studies in Bhāsa* :

IV. *A concordance of the dramas*, Poona, 1923.

² Arguments stated by Dr. V. S. Sukthankar, *J.A.O.S.*, 42, p. 59, and by Dr. G. Morgenstierne. *Über das Verhältniss zwischen Cārudatta und Mṛcchakaṭikā*, Leipzig, 1921.

Plays that were older than *The Little Clay Cart* could hardly be contemporary with a farce like the *Matta-Vilāsa* of the seventh century.

B. If, in spite of certain external similarities and internal correspondences, we should assume a diversity of authorship, the claims of each play would have to be considered separately. *The Vision of Vāsavadattā* and *The Minister's Vows* would then have the strongest claims on the evidence.

The various similarities, however, would make it difficult to suppose the plays belonged to very different periods. So the evidence of the *Cārudatta* and *The Little Clay Cart* comes in again.

As a matter of fact few writers have adopted this hypothesis.

C. The third hypothesis is to a certain extent a variant of the first. It is implied in a limited form in what Dr. Sarup suggested about 'different recensions' in his Introduction to *The Vision of Vāsavadattā* (p. 28).

Something of the kind is suggested by Dr. F. W. Thomas in his article on the date of the *Svapna-Vāsavadattam*.¹ As defined above, however, this hypothesis contains the possibility of a much more extensive revision or rewriting than Dr. Sarup, for one, would be ready to admit.

On this hypothesis the problem becomes more complicated. It is no longer a matter of voting pro-Bhāsa or anti-Bhāsa once for all. It becomes a question of distinguishing the true Bhāsa from the pseudo-Bhāsa, not merely play by play, but scene by scene and even verse by verse. Along the lines of this hypothesis, we might explain some of the inconsistency of the Prākṛit, mingling apparently old and more modern forms. Again, every reader must feel that some of the scenes are very inferior to the best, that some of the verses are flat and of inferior workmanship. *The Statue Play* has the one striking original scene that gives its name to the play. The later acts,

¹ *J. R. A. S.*, 1928, p. 877 and following. 'Minor changes are indeed probable', p. 899.

especially the sixth and seventh, are conventional and rather feeble. Have they not been added by a later hand?

If we ask why the *Ārūdatta* was not completed by the later hand, the answer is that the existence of *The Little Clay Cart* made it unnecessary. Moreover it was customary in South India for an acting company to play incomplete plays or even single scenes, as modern schools and colleges often do. Dr. Sarup has a transcript of a MS. in old Malayalam character containing only one act (the third) of the *Pratijñā-Yaugandharāyaṇam*. If that is an old custom it might account for the preservation of isolated scenes from Bhāsa, which could be padded out or completed at a later date. It remains to see whether any linguistic indications coincide with the more subjective judgments of taste.

The translation has been made without prejudice regarding authenticity. One translator has been more sceptical than the other, but we have done our best for every act. The aim has been to represent all that is in the original (excepting a few repeated or redundant words), but to shake off the burden of the Sanskrit sentence just enough to make the dialogue and recited passages tolerable to the general reader.

No attempt has been made to render verses by verse, which would be apt to jingle, but only to suggest the difference between plain prose and recitative, between more dignified Sanskrit and colloquial or dialectic Prakrit.

‘The best in this kind are but shadows.’ We shall be content if our shadow be not too wooden to produce a momentary illusion.

A. C. W.

L. S.

LAHORE 1929.

NOTE

A MS. of Sanskrit play usually begins with a benedictory stanza called the Nāndī, followed by the stage direction *Nāndy-ante tataḥ praviśati sūtradhāraḥ* 'On the conclusion of the Nāndī then enters the Stage-manager'.

In these Trivandrum plays, as in a number of others in South India, this stage direction comes first, followed by a benedictory verse, which appears to be exactly what is ordinarily called a Nāndī.

Paṇḍit Gaṇapati Śāstrī argued that in these plays *Nāndī* must have had another meaning. Following him Dr. Sarup, in his translation of *The Vision of Vāsavadattā*, thought it referred to some kind of overture, and rendered it as 'flourish of trumpets'. Another explanation seems more likely. If the opening invocation of prayer was not originally fixed but could be varied on occasion, it would not necessarily be composed by the author, who could thus begin his draft of a play with the stock stage direction. When a special verse peculiar to the play was composed indicating the name of the play and of the characters, this would then be inserted in the play after that stage direction. Such verses might be composed at a later date, when rather tasteless paronomasia was more in fashion. Attached to plays of Plautus we find an acrostic prologue (even two of them) not supposed to be the work of Plautus. If, on the other hand, we regard the special verse as contemporary with the rest, we may regard it as a *Raṅgadvāra*, a benedictory verse composed by the author and recited after the *Nāndī* (vide H. R. Divekar, *Timing of Dramatic Representations in India*, J.R.A.S. October 1928, p. 894, and Keith, *Sanskrit Drama*, p. 340).

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THE MINISTER'S VOWS

(*Pratijñā-Yaugandharāyaṇam*)

INTRODUCTION

MANY are the stories of Udayana the king of the Vatsas and his adventures in Ujjain. The capital of the Vatsas (also called Vamsas) was at Kauśāmbī, the modern Kosam, on the banks of the Jamna near Allahabad.¹

In Buddha's days their king was called Udayana (Pali Udena). The stories of how he obtained his wives seem to reflect some ups and downs of that little kingdom between the powerful neighbours of Ujjain and Magadha.

Vāsavadattā, the first queen, represents an alliance with Ujjain and Padmāvati, the second queen an alliance with Magadha. King Udayana, the hero of these tales, is represented as the perfection of chivalry, specially skilled in the management of elephants and of the lute. He captured the heart of Vāsavadattā, the Princess of Ujjain, by teaching her the lute. He carried her off on a stolen elephant. To do all this he must be in Ujjain. The story brings him there as a prisoner of war. But such a perfect hero could never be defeated in the ordinary way. He could only be captured by some trick. The ruse employed was that of the famous artificial elephant made to hold a hundred soldiers. This was made to look like a huge blue elephant and placed in a remote glade of the forest. King Udayana is induced to leave his army to hunt this wonderful elephant. Completely deceived in spite of his elephant lore, he is captured and taken to Ujjain.

Our play begins at a point where Udayana has set out, and his minister, Yaugandharāyaṇa, gets news of the trick which the king of Ujjain intends to use. The minister has sent for a man to take a message of warning to the king. A soldier Hamsaka arrives and describes in a long dialogue with the minister how the king was captured and taken to Ujjain. The minister, full of remorse at the inadequacy of his precautions, makes a solemn vow that he will outwit the victorious king of Ujjain and restore Udayana to Kauśāmbī. (ACT I.)

Bhāsa's scene of the artificial elephant was criticized by Bhāmaha as incredible. Is this the scene so criticized?

¹ Long disputed, this identification has been finally established by R. B. Daya Ram.

The next act introduces us to a domestic scene in the palace at Ujjain. The old king cannot make up his mind about his daughter's marriage, and speaks of various suitors. 'Why these details?' says the queen. 'Give her to such a one that we may never rue the day.' 'Oh yes', replies the king, 'it is easy for you to say that now, and for me to listen to your reproaches afterwards.' As the king puts the question—'Which seems to thee most worthy?' a chamberlain bursts in with: 'The king of the Vatsas', and relates the capture of Udayana.

Here, as in the queen's mention of her daughter's latest craze to learn the lute, the audience gets hints of what is to come; a frequent feature of these plays.

The account of Udayana's capture and the orders given for his reception redound to his honour. The king begins to waver. (ACT II.)

In the third act the minister, Yaugandharāyaṇa, communicates his plot to his colleague, Rumaṇvān, and the jester of the Vatsa court. They meet in Ujjain disguised. The jester appears as a mendicant prattling about a bowl of sweets. To him come a Madman and then a Buddhist monk. The three forgather in a Fire Shrine, and we learn who they are. The plot is to infuriate a female elephant so that Udayana's assistance might be sought. He will then mount and ride away. Unfortunately the Vatsa king is enamoured of the Ujjain princess, and will never go without her. Yaugandharāyaṇa makes his second vow and swears his king shall take the maid as well. They break up their conference, the madman going out gibbering to the boys in the street. (ACT III.)

In an amusing interlude an intoxicated page, really a Vatsa spy, describes how he pawned the elephant Bhadrāvati. Then he tells us of the capture of Yaugandharāyaṇa. 'What is this?' asks a soldier. 'All Kauśāmbī is here except the wall and the gatehouse.'

The captive minister converses with a minister of Ujjain. A chamberlain arrives with a present from the king of Ujjain and the news that their Majesties propose to make the best of things and celebrate the marriage by means of painted portraits. (ACT IV.)

Two of the principal characters in the story do not appear at all. We are told so much about the hero, Udayana, the king of the Vatsas, that it is almost with surprise we realize at the end of the play that we have never seen him. We seem to know him by his impulsive actions, his daring, his pride, and his readiness to fall in love, but all his words and whims have been reported by others. The author may well have felt that Udayana should not appear while he was in captivity. Vāsavadattā was still a girl not yet betrothed. We do not see her, but we are con-

tinually reminded of her existence and of her importance as a factor in the plot. There were several variant versions of the story, and it is not quite clear what is supposed to have happened between act ii and act iii or between act iii and act iv. Indeed, there seems to be some inconsistency. In act ii the conversation of the king and queen about their daughter seems to lead up to the well-known incident of the music lesson—in which Udayana, introduced behind a curtain as a teacher of the lute, is taunted by his pupil and lifts the curtain.

The queen says Vāsavadattā has gone to a lady-musician for a lesson on the lute. 'Whence this sudden desire for music?' asks the king. 'She saw another girl playing and wishes to learn herself.' 'That is just like a girl', grumbles the king. 'And there is something I was to tell you,' adds the queen; 'she would like a teacher, she says.' To which the king, 'What does she want a teacher for, just when she is about to be married? Her husband will teach her.' The audience must inevitably think of Udayana as the teacher and the husband.

Later on the chamberlain brings in Udayana's famous lute, and the king sends it to Vāsavadattā.

Then hearing of Udayana's wounds his heart softens towards his enemy. He orders that the captive is to be treated with every consideration. There should be no tactless talk.

Learning that he had been carried into the Middle Palace and placed near the peacocks' perches, he is dissatisfied, and commands that the wounded man be taken into the *mañibhūmikā* to shield him from the sun.

By the end of the act he begins to feel some affection for his defeated adversary, whom we in the audience all know to be his future son-in-law.

Now in act iii a very different incident is used to introduce Vāsavadattā to Udayana, and we learn that the Vatsa king is in prison. 'His fetters clank as he bows before the gods' (iii. 4). But he still has (or has recovered) his lute. 'So by the very consent of his enemy he can come out of prison, grasping the lute, which shares his sorrows, and subdue the elephant.' Then we are told that the Princess Vāsavadattā went in an open palanquin to worship at a shrine opposite the prison gate. Udayana happened to be taking the air outside the prison gate with the permission of the superintendent. 'Then the palanquin was halted for the men to change shoulders, and he saw the princess as clearly as you like.' And then the prison was turned into a garden of delight and he was ready to play a comedy of passion.

'But surely', objects the minister, 'the king cannot have fallen in

love with her?' 'Troubles, sir, comes in shoals', replies the jester, 'That is exactly what he has done.'

The music lesson is referred to in *The Vision of Vāsavadattā* in which Udayana speaks of his pupil. When did it take place? We can hardly place it before act iii, and suppose that the jester and the ministers knew nothing about it. Indeed, the usual account is that Yaugandharāyaṇa arranged it. We must suppose, then, that the music lessons were arranged between act iii and act iv. This would fit in as the means of carrying out the minister's second vow to carry off 'both the king and the long-eyed maid'. (III. 9.)

This involves postponing the departure of Udayana, which had been arranged for the following day. Also it involves a modification of the usual account of the music lesson as the occasion of the first meeting of the lovers.

Is it possible that act ii is by a different hand? The first act, or something like the first act, we know was written by Bhāsa as the main idea of it, and some details have been criticized. The third act is vigorous and original. Every one enjoys the Interlude, with the intoxicated page who pawned the elephant, and here we find the old verse common to the *Arthasāstra*. The rest of the fourth act merely glorifies Yaugandharāyaṇa, and tells us that the king and queen have determined to celebrate the marriage between the Vatsa king and Vāsavadattā by means of painted portraits. (The painted portraits reoccur at the end of *The Vision of Vāsavadattā*.) For the stage act iv is slow with no dramatic movement or situation. It alludes to the music lesson (iv. 18) and to Mahāsena's kindness.

At the same time it must be admitted that the Court Scene is clever, and if it be by a second hand, that second hand was skilful, and reminds us of the delicate handling of several scenes in *The Vision of Vāsavadattā*.

Note. Dr. Sarup will not admit any inconsistency. He thinks acts iii and iv form a harmonious whole with act ii and give a logical development of the course of events in continuation of act ii. He admits that the playwright's version of the lover's first meeting differs from that of other writers, but no other version is given in this play. He thinks the music lesson came later, the famous lute having been restored to Udayana in the meantime, or at any rate in time to charm the elephant. The reversal of the sympathetic treatment of the captive king he would ascribe to the influence of the minister, Bharatarohaka.

Some inconsistency, of course, would not be necessarily fatal to authenticity.

DRAMATIS PERSONAE

(In order of appearance.)

Stage-manager } Only in the Prologue to introduce the play. The name
Actress } of the Sūtra-dhāra 'holder of the strings' is derived
from some form of puppet play.

In Kauśāmbī :

YAUGANDHARĀYAṆA, the principal minister of Udayana the Vatsa king.
Sālaka, the intended messenger not required.
Vijayā = Portress, stock name of a female doorkeeper.
Nirmuṇḍaka, 'Shaveling', servant in the minister's household.
Hamsaka, 'Gosling' a soldier of Udayana's escort, returned.
Brahman.

In Ujjain :

Chamberlain of the Avantī Court. (Bādarāyaṇa.)
KING OF UJJAIN, Pradyota or Mahāsena.
Queen of Ujjain (Aṅgāravatī).
Jester (Vasantaka) of Kauśāmbī, disguised as a beggar.
Madman = Yaugandharāyaṇa in disguise.
Buddhist Monk = Rumaṇvān the other Vatsa minister.
Two soldiers (or servants).
Page (a Vatsa spy) who feigns intoxication.
Two servants.
Bharatarohaka, minister of Ujjain.

N.B. Two principals, Udayana, king of the Vatsas, and Vāsava-dattā, princess of Ujjain, do not appear at all.

PROLOGUE

[*At the end of the Opening*¹ *enter the Stage-Manager.*]

Stage-Manager. May the son of Yugandhara² protect you, he that is styled the infant King, lord of a mighty host, of exceeding great vigour who, allied with his own energy, gave victory to Indra.³ (1)

[*Walks about, looking towards the back of the stage.*]

Come here, good lady.

[*Enter an Actress.*]

Actress. Here I am, sir.

Manager. Come now, sing us something. After that, when the audience has been put into a good humour by your song, we will begin the performance. Why, good lady, what is this hesitation? Are not you going to sing?

Actress. I have had a dream, sir, this very day, that all is not well with my relatives, so I wish your honour would send a man to find out how my people are.

Manager. Very well,

A man will I send palpably fit for the purpose.

[*Voice behind the scene.*]

Sālaka, are you ready?

Manager. Just as Yaugandharāyaṇa
here is sending out his man. (2)

[*Exeunt ambo.*]

ACT I

[*The scene is in the Vatsa Palace at Kauśāmbī.*]

[*Enter Yaugandharāyaṇa with Sālaka.*]

Yaugandharāyaṇa. Sālaka, are you ready?

Sālaka. Quite ready, sir.

Yaugandharāyaṇa. You have a very long way to go.

Sālaka. The devotion with which I serve your honour will go still further.

¹ Nāndī, see note, p. ix.

² Skanda son of Śiva.

³ By paronomasia the verse introduces

the names of Vāsavadattā, Mahāsena, Yaugandharāyaṇa, and the King of the Vatsas.

Yaugandharāyaṇa. Ha! A strong man or a devoted man will go far. For,

A difficult task should be entrusted to devoted agents, or to a connoisseur of qualities held in esteem.

Whosoever be the plan by which efficiency is purchased, success or failure depends on the dictates of fate. (3)

To-morrow the king is to leave the Bamboo Forest and pass through three of the densest woods to the Elephant Forest, and you must wait on him before he starts.

Sālaka. I suppose, sir, I shall be sent with a letter containing the gist of the business.

Yaugandharāyaṇa. Vijayā.¹

[*Enter Vijayā.*]

Vijayā. Here I am, sir.

Yaugandharāyaṇa. Vijayā, hurry up that letter and the ribbon.²

Vijayā. Yes, sir. [*Exit.*]

Yaugandharāyaṇa. Have you ever been that way before?

Sālaka. No, but I have heard about it.

Yaugandharāyaṇa. That, too, is a sign of an intelligent man. Well, a report has reached us, that Pradyota means to hoodwink our king by setting up a blue elephant and masking its body with forest elephants. I only hope our master's judgement has not already been led astray. But oh, how fearful Pradyota must be of the king of the Vatsas! The inefficiency of his vast army is manifest. For,

A huge force he clearly has, but lacking in unity of action, a number of brave warriors there are therein, but no devotion.

So in the hour of battle he prefers to resort to a trick. For every army without devotion is no better than a wife that lacks the same.³ (4)

[*Enter Vijayā.*]

Vijayā. Here is the letter. The queen-mother says the ribbon is being prepared quickly by all the married ladies.

Yaugandharāyaṇa. Vijayā, my compliments to her Majesty, and

¹ *Ovajjhai*. Comm. in sense of 'apavahati' (= 'ava-vahyati') 'dispatches'; or v.l. *obajjhai* in sense of 'apabadhnāti' (= 'ava-badhyati') 'restrains', so 'I am only waiting for the letter'.

² *Pratisāra*. 'Cord or ribbon worn as an amulet' M. W. It was prepared by ladies in the queen's suite. Its purpose is not clear. Was it to serve as a passport? Or as a

protection against demons? It could hardly be the fastening of the letter, i. e. the strings on which the seal was stamped? Gaṇapati Śāstri quotes Keśava for the sense of a protective thread worn on the arm. Sukthankar agrees. It is still a custom to tie something as a charm on the arm of one departing on a journey.

³ L. S. 'is as weak as a woman'.

would she let me have the ribbon whether it is prepared by all the married ladies, or is only a single one.

Vijayā. Very well, sir. [*Exit.*]

[*Enter Nirmuṇḍaka.*]

Nirmuṇḍaka. Your honour's health.

Yaugandharāyaṇa. How now, Nirmuṇḍaka?

Nirmuṇḍaka. Your honour, Hamsaka is here, he has come from his Majesty.

Yaugandharāyaṇa. What, Hamsaka, come alone?

Sālaka, you can take a moment's rest. Either you will have to go doubly quick or else take your ease.

Sālaka. Very well, sir. [*Exit.*]

Yaugandharāyaṇa. Nirmuṇḍaka, bring in Hamsaka.

Nirmuṇḍaka. Very good, sir. [*Exit.*]

Yaugandharāyaṇa. That Hamsaka, who has never before left the king's side, should have come here alone fills me with apprehension. For,

Like a man who comes home from abroad, after leaving his
kinsfolk in trouble, my mind is now on tenter-hooks. Shall I
hear good news or bad? (5)

[*Enter Hamsaka and Nirmuṇḍaka.*]

Nirmuṇḍaka. Come in, sir.

Hamsaka. Where is his honour?

Nirmuṇḍaka. That's him standing there. Go up to him.

Hamsaka. [*Approaching.*] Your honour's health.

Yaugandharāyaṇa. Hamsaka, do not say the king has gone to the Elephant Forest.

Hamsaka. Why, sir, the king went there yesterday.

Yaugandharāyaṇa. Alack! It's useless sending. We have been deceived. But is there any hope?¹ Or must our life end this very day?

Hamsaka. The king still lives at least.

Yaugandharāyaṇa. 'Still lives'—that indicates a lesser calamity. My master must have been taken prisoner.

Hamsaka. Yes, your honour's guessed right. The king's been taken.

Yaugandharāyaṇa. What, my royal master taken prisoner? Alas! alas! a mighty task has been accomplished by the good fortune of Pradyota. From this day on there is clear proof of the incapacity and disgrace of the ministers of the Vatsa king. Where is Rumaṇvān now, so wise in dealing with events before they happen? What has become of the cavalry? For,

This devoted cavalry recruited from good families, captivated

¹ L. S. 'countermeasure' *pratyaśā*.

by the friendship of the king—every trooper fit with exercise and versed in tactics—was it bought by the foe? or lost in a trackless jungle? Or was it all overwhelmed and destroyed in battle? (8)

Hamsaka. If the king had been accompanied by the whole of his escort, this misfortune would not have happened.

Yaugandharāyaṇa. What! my master was not accompanied by the whole of his escort?

Hamsaka. Hearken, your honour.

Yaugandharāyaṇa. You are tired with your journey. Sit down.

Hamsaka. Very good, sir. [*Sits down.*] Hearken, your honour. One night just before dawn, a pleasant time for riding, the king crossed the River Narmadā by the sandy ford, and, leaving the ladies encamped in the Bamboo Forest, he set out for the Elephant Forest by a path fit for wild animals¹ with nothing but an umbrella and a force just sufficient to cope with a herd of elephants.

Yaugandharāyaṇa. Yes, and then?

Hamsaka. When the sun had risen the space of an arrow-shot and we had gone so many leagues and were still a league away from the Madagandhira Mountain, we sighted our herd of elephants, throwing up mud from a pond as uneven in appearance as stone-work half finished.²

Yaugandharāyaṇa. And what then?

Hamsaka. While the troops were reconnoitring and the herd getting suspicious had formed up in a mass, a certain foot soldier, the author of all this trouble, came up to the king.

Yaugandharāyaṇa. Stay. Did he not say he had seen about a league from the place an elephant that was blue all over, except the nails and tusks, with its body covered by jasmine creepers and *sāl* trees?

Hamsaka. What, your honour knew about that? Then the mischief has happened while we were awake.

Yaugandharāyaṇa. Ah, Hamsaka, a man may be awake, but fate is stronger. Go on.

Hamsaka. Then the king honoured the cruel fellow with a gift of a hundred gold pieces and said: 'It must be that sovereign elephant called Blue Lotus that I have read of in a treatise on elephants. Do you

¹ Reading *magga-maddaṇṭe* for *magga-maddaṇṭe*?

² The rounded slaty backs of the elephants splashed with wet mud resemble a wall of dark grey boulders being built.

But L. S. following comm. prefers 'of terrifying appearance as if incompletely marked with red arsenic', i. e. taking *śīlā* in the sense of *śīlā-dhātu* and *nirmīta* in the sense of *racīta*.

attend carefully to this herd, while I go with my lute and bring in that other tusker.¹

Yaugandharāyaṇa. What, then, was Rumaṇvān doing to neglect his master at that moment?

Hamsaka. No, no! With all courtesy the minister tried to dissuade the king. 'Quite possibly you might capture even the elephants of the quarters, Airāvaṇa and the rest. But frontier districts being difficult to protect are always troublesome. People living on the frontier are shameless and devoid of good breeding. So let us leave this herd to the infantry only and all of us go together. Your Highness should not go alone.'

Yaugandharāyaṇa. Did Rumaṇvān say this to the king before the army? I wish I too could show such unspeakable devotion to my master. What happened then?

Hamsaka. Then the king silenced the minister with an oath touching his life, got down from the elephant 'Dark Cloud' and mounted his horse Sundarapāṭala. Then the sun being less than half-way in its course, with only twenty soldiers, away he rode.

Yaugandharāyaṇa. To victory! Alack, in my zeal I am forgetting your previous story. Well, proceed.

Hamsaka. Then after we had gone about double the distance, we sighted at a hundred bow-lengths that counterfeit of a divine elephant. Its blue colour was lost in the shadows of the *sāl* trees of the same hue, but it was revealed by the bright pair of tusks sticking out as it were from nothing.

Yaugandharāyaṇa. Say rather, Hamsaka, it was our misery that you sighted. Well, go on.

Hamsaka. Then the king dismounted from his horse and drew near with a salute to the deities and with his lute in his hand. Then there arose behind us a mighty uproar that seemed to be concerted with one purpose.

Yaugandharāyaṇa. An uproar, you say? Go on.

Hamsaka. When we faced about to ascertain the cause of the uproar, that artificial elephant manned by warriors instead of elephant-men advanced towards us.¹

Yaugandharāyaṇa. And then?

Hamsaka. Then the king heartened the young noblemen, calling them by name and their family names. 'This is just one of Pradyota's tricks', says he.—'Follow me', he says; 'with valour will I now counter the enemy's move for all his unfair start', and with these words he rushed on the foe.

¹ *Mahāmātra-uttarādyudhiya-adhiṣṭhita.*

Yaugandharāyaṇa. Rushed on the foe? Nay, but he was right.

A high-minded hero relying on his courage, mortified at being deceived, and set in a narrow strait—what else could he do? (7)

Proceed.

Hamsaka. Playing as it were with his horse Sundarapātala, who obeyed his slightest wish, he struck with even greater fury than he had intended, exerting himself to the utmost because the enemy was so much more numerous. Then when all his following was dead or wounded, with only myself to protect—no, no, to be protected by him, wearied with fighting the livelong day, fallen from his horse on account of buffets innumerable, at the dread hour of the darkening sun, the king swooned away.

Yaugandharāyaṇa. The king swooned away? What then?

Hamsaka. Then to the best of their power they outraged the king, binding his person like a common fellow's with rough creepers, torn out recklessly from the nearest thicket.

Yaugandharāyaṇa. What, outraged the king?

Bonds were fixed on his arms in place of bracelets. Huge in the shoulder, those two arms with their expanding sinews are as thick as elephants trunks, while the hands thereof make the bow vibrate, endlessly fixing on arrows carried afar,¹ arms that are busy in homage to brahmans, arms that honour his friends with their embraces. (8)

At what time did the king recover consciousness?

Hamsaka. Why, your honour, when the wretches had done with their insults.

Yaugandharāyaṇa. Thank heaven, though they assaulted his person they could not mar his glory. And then?

Hamsaka. When they saw the king had come to, those wretches ran off in all directions, describing the valour of our royal master by crying 'He has slain my brother, he has slain my father, . . . and my son, and my mate —' and so forth.²

Yaugandharāyaṇa. What happened then?

Hamsaka. Another strange thing. After urging one another on, one of them resolved to do a dreadful deed. Brutally he grasped the king's locks, dishevelled in the press of battle, and dragged his face to the south, then gripping the sword in his hand he took a run to give force to his onset and—

¹ ? *dūra-bharaṇāt*.

² This is mentioned by Bhāmaha.

Yaugandharāyaṇa. Stay a moment, Hamsaka, that I may get my breath.

Hamsaka. And at the pace he was going the brute stumbled where the ground was slippery with pools of blood, and fell down helpless, baulked of his fell design.

Yaugandharāyaṇa. Down he fell, the wretch. Yes,

When the Earth is not harried by foemen's chariots and is free from confusion of castes, herself protected she guards her lord in distress. (9)

Hamsaka. Then there appeared on the scene one of Pradyota's ministers called Śālaṅkāyana, whom the king had stunned with a blow of his spear. He gave the order for no violence.

Yaugandharāyaṇa. Well?

Hamsaka. Then he saluted the king, a rare courtesy at such a time, and had him freed of his fetters.

Yaugandharāyaṇa. My master released! Well done, Śālaṅkāyana! Distress can change even an enemy into a friend. Hamsaka, I feel somewhat relieved. And what did this excellent person do next?

Hamsaka. The king was too badly wounded to ride, so this gentleman had him put in a litter, with many courteous expressions of sympathy, and took him to Ujjain.

Yaugandharāyaṇa. My master taken away!

This is the very disgrace we feared, this surpasses Pradyota's expectation. His very pride involves our king in misery. (10)
How shall the king look at him, whom erstwhile he ignored? Perfect in speech, how shall he listen to cowardly taunts? How shall he restrain his wrath made impotent by capture? A prisoner is humiliated be he well treated or insulted. (11)

[Enter Portress.]

Portress. Sir, here is the ribbon.

Yaugandharāyaṇa. These things are brought at a time when the destruction of our good fortune makes them useless, like the auspicious lustration of a charger, when the war is over. (12)

Portress. Here is the ribbon, sir.

Yaugandharāyaṇa. Put it away, Vijayā.

Portress. What am I to say to the queen-mother?

Yaugandharāyaṇa. Yes, Vijayā, there's that.

Portress. What's that?

Yaugandharāyaṇa. This.

Portress. Speak, sir, do speak out.

Yaugandharāyaṇa. Well, it cannot be suppressed. I shall inform her Majesty. Vijayā, steel your heart. [*Whispers.*] It's like this . . .

Portress. Ah!

Yaugandharāyaṇa. Vijayā, your name forbids weakness.

Portress. So, I will go, unhappy.

Yaugandharāyaṇa. Do not tell her Majesty all at once, Vijayā, that the king has been taken prisoner. One must guard a mother's heart, so tender with affection.

Portress. How am I to tell her, then?

Yaugandharāyaṇa. Listen.

First discourse on the evils of war, suggesting dangers. When the meaning is doubtful, death suspected and grief at its height, then report the actual facts. (13)

Portress. I will manage it. [*Exit.*]

Yaugandharāyaṇa. Hamsaka, why didn't you go with the king?

Hamsaka. Sir, I was set on doing myself that honour, but I was charged by Śālaṅkāyana to go to Kauśāmbī and report the news.

Yaugandharāyaṇa. What was his intention, to reduce us to despair? Or is he ridding himself of the attendance of a devoted servant?

Hamsaka. Very likely.

Yaugandharāyaṇa. By his arrogance he stands revealed, and in the success of all his undertakings he can rejoice. But did the king say nothing about me?

Hamsaka. He did, your honour. As I took respectful farewell of the king, half-blind with unshed tears, seeming as if he had much to communicate, he said to me, 'Go and see Yaugandharāyaṇa.'

Yaugandharāyaṇa. Speak out freely, these are the words of the king.

Hamsaka. 'Go and see Yaugandharāyaṇa.'

Yaugandharāyaṇa. Nay now, did he say nothing of all the ministers of the council, and only mention me?

Hamsaka. That is so.

Yaugandharāyaṇa. If he sends you to me alone, it is because my precautions were inadequate, because I have not earned his salt, because I have made no return for the dignity bestowed upon me.

Hamsaka. Very likely.

Yaugandharāyaṇa. The king shall see me another man.

Be it in the enemy's capital, in bondage or in the forest, be it in the next world, if destruction come upon him, he shall find me equally devoted.

I shall outwit that king who thinks himself the victor, and my

lord, restored to his kingdom, shall praise the faithful servant at his side. (14)

[*Behind the Scene.*]

Woe, woe, the master taken.

Yaugandharāyaṇa. There are the women wailing to ease their grief as best they may, thereby proclaiming the incapacity of the ministers. (15)

[*Enter Portress.*]

Portress. The queen-mother, sir,—

Yaugandharāyaṇa. Yes?

Portress. Says—

Yaugandharāyaṇa. What?

Portress. 'To such a gallant king of the Vatsas, surrounded by his friends, this thing has happened. What can be done in the face of Fate? So we must honour his friends and take heart. Now there is one man who is too wise to be despondent in difficulties, or lose heart before obstacles, who does not despair when he has been tricked, or abandon his life when he fails. That man I request, first as the friend of my Vatsa, and secondly as his minister, like another son, to restore my son to me.

Yaugandharāyaṇa. Ah, those are brave words from her Majesty, characteristic of the royal house. I reverence her for her esteem. Vijayā, some water.

Portress. Yes, sir. [*Exit and re-enters.*]

Here is water.

Yugandharāyaṇa. Give it me. [*Sips.*] Vijayā, what did her Majesty say?

Portress. 'My son, restore my son to me.'

Yaugandharāyaṇa. What did the king say, Hamsaka?

Hamsaka. 'Go and see Yaugandharāyaṇa.'

Yaugandharāyaṇa. Vijayā,

If I do not liberate the king, seized by the enemy's force, like the moon by Rāhu, my name is not Yaugandharāyaṇa. (16)¹

Portress. So be it, your honour. [*Exit.*]

[*Enter Nirmuṇḍaka.*]

Nirmuṇḍaka. A strange thing, sir. A number of brahmans were bidden to a feast for the good of the king. Another brahman, dressed as a madman, saw them there and laughed aloud, saying: 'Eat freely, reverend gentlemen, eat to your hearts' content. Prosperity is

¹ This is the minister's first vow.

coming to this royal house.' And then right on the words he vanished.
Yaugandharāyaṇa. Is this true?

[*Enter a Brahman.*]

Brahman. These are the peculiar clothes that reverend brahman wore and left behind for some purpose of his own. It was the Blessed Dvaipāyana that came disguised in these clothes.

Yaugandharāyaṇa. So Dvaipāyana came here.

Brahman. Yes.

Yaugandharāyaṇa. Let us see those clothes.

Brahman. Here they are, sir.

Yaugandharāyaṇa. Why, now, I am transformed. Look you, sir, I feel as if I had reached the king's presence. These clothes have been left for my instruction.

This madman's guise, donned by the holy man, will cover me
 and liberate the king. (17)

[*Enter Portress.*]

Portress. Your honour, the queen-mother says she wishes to see her son.

Yaugandharāyaṇa. At once, I come. Good sir, wait for me in the chapel.¹

Brahman. Very well. [*Exit.*]

Yaugandharāyaṇa. Hamsaka, now you may rest yourself.

Hamsaka. Very well, sir. [*Exit.*]

Yaugandharāyaṇa. Lead the way, Vijayā.

Portress. As your honour wishes.

Yaugandharāyaṇa. Fire springs from wood which is rotated: the earth when dug yields water. Nothing is impossible for men of daring. All efforts starting on the right road come to fruition. (18)

[*Exeunt omnes.*]

END OF THE FIRST ACT.

¹ *Śāntigṛha.* A small room for the performance of propitiatory rites.

ACT II

INTERLUDE

[*The scene is in Ujjain, the capital of Avanti.*]

[*Enter the Chamberlain.*]

Chamberlain. Ābhīraka! Go, Ābhīraka, and take this message from Mahāsena to the keeper of the gate. 'The noble Jaivanti, preceptor of the king of Benares, has arrived to-day on an embassy. Let him be lodged in comfort without regard to the ordinary treatment of an envoy. Every effort must be made that he may enjoy the hospitality due to a guest.' Ah, so it goes on from day to day. Embassies are sent by royal houses of suitable rank to sue for the hand of the Princess, but Mahāsena refuses nobody and favours none. Now why is that? Surely it is Fate that is controlling the princess's marriage. For

It is manifest that our Monarch awaits an envoy from that king whose destined bride she is. Until that envoy comes, he knows, but disregards the qualities of other kings. (1)

Ah! the cowering of the attendants in this place shows the master is at hand. So here comes Mahāsena.

His sturdy arms are studded with sapphires, glistening like blades of *dūrvā* grass, and encircled with golden armlets; and he issues from this forest glade of golden palms like the God of War from a thicket of reeds.¹ (2)

[*Exit.*]

END OF THE INTERLUDE.

[*Enter the King of Ujjain with his retinue.*]

King. Kings reduced to servitude carry on their coronets the dust from my charger's hooves. Yet am I not content while the virtuous Vatsa king bows not his head, proud as he is of his elephant lore. (3)

Bādarāyaṇa!

[*Enter the Chamberlain.*]

Chamberlain. Greeting.

King. Is Jaivanti lodged?

Chamberlain. Yes, lodged and suitably entertained.

¹ Kārtikeya the God of War was said to have sprung from a thicket of reeds.

King. You have done well. Your zeal is ever for the glory of the royal house. An honourable reception is ordained for all arrivals. But every one I question about the marriage of the princess conceals his own opinion. [*Looking at the Chamberlain.*] I think you wish to speak, Bādarāyaṇa.

Chamberlain. It is nothing. An idea struck me about the marriage.

King. Come now, no concealment. This business concerns everybody. Speak out.

Chamberlain. Mahāsena, this is what I would say :

From day to day envoys are sent by royal houses of the proper rank to sue for the Princess' hand ; but your Highness refuses nobody and favours none. Now why is that ?

King. Bādarāyaṇa, this is how it is. I am so eager for the best qualities in the bridegroom, and so fond of Vāsavadattā, that I cannot make up my mind.

For first of all I have set my mind on his coming from a noble house, and then he must have a tender heart, for this quality, though gentle, is powerful.

Thirdly he must have beauty, no virtue indeed, but women dread its absence. Lastly he must be fierce and strong to protect his youthful bride. (4)

Chamberlain. All these virtues are not found in these days combined in one man, except in Mahāsena.

King. That is what makes me hesitate.

To find a good mate for his girl, needs a father's greatest care. The rest depends on Fate. Contrariwise I have never seen it go. (5)

But the mothers always grieve when a daughter is given in marriage. So ask the queen to come here.

Chamberlain. As your Highness commands. [*Exit.*]

King. Ha ! This embassy from the King of Benares reminds me of Śālaṅkāyana, who went to capture the Vatsa king. Another day and no news from the good brahman.

Though our plan was based on his favourite sport, all his ministers are there to exert their zeal. (6)

[*Enter the Queen with her retinue.*]

Queen. Mahāsena, greeting.

King. Pray be seated.

Queen. As my lord commands. [*Sits down.*]

King. Where is Vāsavadattā ?

Queen. She has gone to Uttarā, a lady-musician, for a lesson on the Nārada lute.

King. Whence this sudden desire for music?

Queen. She happened to see Kāñcanamālā playing on a lute and wished to learn herself.

King. That is just like a girl.

Queen. And there is something I was to tell you.

King. What is it?

Queen. She would like a teacher, she says.

King. What does she want a teacher for, just when she is about to be married? Her husband will teach her.

Queen. Oh! Has the time really come for my little girl to go?

King. Come now. You were always pestering me with, 'It must be arranged, it must be arranged.' So why are you distressed?

Queen. I am anxious for her betrothal. It is parting from her that pains me. But to whom is she betrothed?

King. We have not yet decided.

Queen. Not even yet?

King. A maid unwed is a source of shame, and when betrothed, of an anxious mind. Twixt love and duty mothers are in a sorry plight. (7)

Vāsavadattā is certainly of an age to attend her father-in-law. And to-day there has come another envoy, the noble Jaivanti, preceptor to the king of Benares. I am attracted by his reputation. [*Aside.*] She says not a word. But she is agitated and her eyes are filled with tears. How can she come to any conclusion? Well, I must tell her about it. [*Aloud.*] As suitors for alliance with us there are the kings . . .

Queen. Why these details? Give her to such a one that we may never rue the day.

King. Oh yes, it is easy for you to say that now, and for me to listen to your reproaches afterwards. This is a difficult matter, so do make your own choice, my queen. Listen,

Our ally of Magadha, Benares' king, the lords of Vaṅga, Surāshṭra, Mithilā, and Śūrasena, all of these attract me by their various qualities. Which seems to thee most worthy? (8)

[*Enter Chamberlain.*]

Chamberlain. The king of the Vatsas.

King. What is this, the king of the Vatsas?

Chamberlain. Pardon, Your Highness, pardon. In my haste to give you good tidings I forgot the proper procedure.

King. Good tidings, you say?

Queen. [*Rising.*] Long live the king.

King. [*Joyfully.*] Why would you miss the good news? Pray be seated.

Queen. As my lord commands. [*Sits down.*]

King. Rise and speak freely.

Chamberlain. [*Rising.*] The honourable minister Śālaṅkāyana has captured the king of the Vatsas.

King. [*Delighted.*] What did you say?

Chamberlain. [*Repeats.*] The honourable minister Śālaṅkāyana has captured the king of the Vatsas.

King. Udayana?

Chamberlain. Yes.

King. The son of Śatānika?

Chamberlain. Certainly.

King. The grandson of Sahasrānika?

Chamberlain. The same.

King. The lord of Kauśāmbī?

Chamberlain. Of course.

King. The expert musician?

Chamberlain. So they say.

King. Actually the Vatsa king?

Chamberlain. Why yes, the Vatsa king.

King. Then is Yaugandharāyana dead?

Chamberlain. Not he, he is in Kauśāmbī.

King. Is he? Then I don't believe the Vatsa king is taken.

Chamberlain. Oh yes, believe me, your Highness.

King. Your tale of Udayana's capture passes my belief. As well say you lifted the Mandara mountain in the palm of your hand. His enemies recount his heroism in battles and Yaugandharāyana's strategy resounds in our ears. (Θ)

Chamberlain. Pardon me, your Highness. I am an old brahman. I have never told your Highness a lie.

King. That is so. Who is this welcome messenger Śālaṅkāyana has sent?

Chamberlain. No messenger. The minister has come himself in the fastest chariot, with the Vatsa king before him.

King. Come himself? What joy! To-day let the army lay armour aside and rest in comfort. From to-day on princes will have no fear, and no need of secret espionage. The sum of it is—to-day I am myself.

Queen. The minister brought him here?

King. Yes.

Queen. Then we shall not affiancé Vāsavadattā to any one at present.

King. This man is my enemy vanquished in battle. Bādarāyaṇa, where is Śālaṅkāyana?

Chamberlain. He is waiting at the Happy Gate.

King. Go and tell Bharatarohaka to receive the minister with the honours due to a prince and bring him in with the Vatsa king.

Chamberlain. As Your Highness commands.

King. Stay a moment.

Chamberlain. I am here.

King. None should be denied a sight of the Vatsa king.

My people have heard of his deeds, now let them see mine enemy all fury within, like a lion captured for a sacrifice. (10)

Chamberlain. As your Highness commands.

Queen. We have known many occasions of rejoicing in this royal house, but I do not remember ever to have seen my lord so delighted.

King. Nor do I remember ever hearing such delightful news as the capture of the Vatsa king.

Queen. It really is the king of the Vatsas?

King. Why, of course!

Queen. I have heard of many royal houses sending to seek an alliance with us. This prince sent nobody.

King. My queen, he ignores my very name, not to speak of desiring an alliance by marriage.

Queen. Ignores? Is he a boy or a fool?

King. He may be a boy, he is no fool.

Queen. What makes him so haughty?

King. The Bharata dynasty, with its long roll of famous Royal Sages and its tradition of deep learning. He is proud of his hereditary knowledge of music. His youthful beauty makes him vain. His people's remarkable attachment makes him confident.

Queen. The very qualities one would desire in a son-in-law. By what perversity has his disability arisen?

King. My queen, would you lend your admiration to an unworthy object? Look you,

Like a fire started in a forest and burning the whole world put together, the flames of my authority are quenched at this man's boundary. (11)

[*Enter Chamberlain.*]

Chamberlain. Your Highness, greeting. Śālaṅkāyana has been honourably received as commanded. He has requested me to present to your

Highness this jewel of a lute, called Ghoshavatī. It used to be played by the Bharatas in the Vatsa Rāja's family. [*Shows the lute.*]

King. I accept it as an auspicious trophy of victory. [*Takes the lute.*]
So this is the famous Ghoshavatī.

Melodious to the ear with a natural harmony when the strings are pressed by finger-tips and set vibrating with a finger-nail, this lute perforce will tame the hearts of elephants like the magic art in the incantation of a sage. (12)

Ah! what joy it brings to use as one wills the treasures won in battle.

My eldest son Gopālaka pursues the charms of polity, and Pālaka the younger shines in manly exercise, music he detests. (13)

So where would this lute be well-bestowed? Did you say, my queen, that Vāsavadattā had taken to the lute?

Queen. Yes.

King. Then give her this one.

Queen. If you give her a lute she will be wilder than ever for it.

King. Let her enjoy herself. It will be hard enough in her father-in-law's house. Bādarāyaṇa, where is the princess?

Chamberlain. She is with the minister.

King. And the ruler of the Vatsas?

Chamberlain. He was so tractable and had so many wounds on his feet and body, that he was carried into the Middle Palace on a litter.

King. I am sorry he has so many wounds. That is the fault of his undaunted valour. In these circumstances it would be too cruel to neglect him. Bādarāyaṇa, go and tell Bharatarohaka to attend to his wounds.

Chamberlain. As your Highness commands.

King. Nay, stay a moment.

Chamberlain. I wait.

King. Every significant gesture should be met with constant attention. His wishes should be inferred from his expression. There should be no talk about defeats or war, but a blessing uttered if he sneezes or anything like that. Compliments should be tactful.

Chamberlain. As your Highness commands.

[*Exit and re-enters.*]

Greeting, your Highness. The Vatsa king had his wounds dressed on the way. It is too soon, they say, for a second dressing. The noon-day sun is at its height.

King. Where is the proud warrior?

Chamberlain. Near the peacocks' perches.

King. Oh, fie! That's no place to shelter in. Bid them take him in to the inlaid room¹ to shield him from the sun.

Chamberlain. As your Highness commands. [*Exit and re-enters.*] Your Highness' commands have been carried out. The minister Bhara-tarokaha desires an interview.

King. Evidently he does not approve of kindness to the Vatsa king. It goes against his policy. I must talk him round.

Queen. Is the marriage settled?

King. No, not quite decided.

Queen. There is no hurry. My little girl is still a child.

King. As you please, Madam. You may withdraw now.

Queen. As my lord commands. [*Exit with retinue.*]

King. [*Thoughtfully.*] At first his arrogance made me his foe, and when he was brought in here I was barely neutral. But now that I hear of his exhaustion in battle, his sorry plight, his life in danger, I feel—nay, I know not what I feel. (14)

[*Exeunt ambo.*]

END OF THE SECOND ACT.

ACT III

[*In Ujjain. Secret meeting of the Jester and the two Ministers of Udayana in disguise.*]

[*Enter the Jester disguised as a beggar.*]

Jester. [*Gesticulating.*] Well now! I put my bowl of sweetmeats on the temple steps, then I counted the gold pieces of my donations and tied them up. Now I turn round and I can't see the bowl of sweets. [*Reflecting.*] That fellow who was hanging about, and I satisfied him with one sweetmeat—he has not followed me. The wall is too high for dogs to get in. The sweets were unbroken as they were cooked and would not attract passers by. Is it possible I ate them myself. If so I'll just bring them up again. Ha, ha! like an old hog's bladder I am bringing up nothing but wind. Or perhaps Śiva has annexed it thinking that what belongs to the Red Goddess² belongs to him. [*More gestures.*] Now this young celibate is misbehaving in several ways.

¹ *maṇibhūmikā*, lit. jewel room.

² *Kātyāyanī*. A name of Durgā, a wife of Śiva

Well, I'll just have a look Why this is my bowl of sweets set at Śiva's feet. Well, I'll take it back.

Give me, O Lord, give me my bowl of sweets. O Lord, thou art my thief. Why! my bowl is painted on the wall. I can't see properly because of the darkness of my distress. Well, I'll wipe it off. Ha! ha! well done, Mr. Painter, well done! The colours are so well laid on, that the more I rub, the clearer it becomes. Very good, I'll wash it off. Now where and oh! where is some water? Here we are, a beautiful tank of pure water. Now may Śiva, like myself, be disappointed of this bowl of sweetmeats.

[*Behind the scene.*]

Sweets, swee-eets—ahoy!

Jester. Curse it, here's a madman has grabbed my bowl of sweets, and laughing as he goes, comes running hither like a foaming stream of dirty rain water in the road. Stop, madman, stop, or I'll break your head with this wooden staff.

[*Enter the Madman.*]

Madman. Sweets, swee-eets, ahoy!

Jester. Good madman, bring me my bowl of sweets.

Madman. What, sweets? Where are they? Whose sweets? Are these sweets thrown away or tied up or eaten?

Jester. No, not eaten, and not thrown away.

Madman. Ah but my mouth waters—that's a sign for eating.

Jester. Good madman, bring me my bowl of sweetmeats. Don't set your heart on another man's goods and get yourself locked up.

Madman. Who, who will lock me up? The sweets protect me.

Dressed in a special way they are ready to give satisfaction

Their price was paid in the king's palace. In the course of time they have become rather soft at the moment. (1)

Jester. Good madman, bring me my bowl of sweets. With this provision I must go to my master's house.

Madman. With this provision I must go a hundred leagues.

Jester. What! are you Indra's elephant?

Madman. Ay, I am the elephant of Indra, only the king of the gods doesn't ride on my back, and I have heard say that Indra was bound with shackles. Then striking with lightning lashes that swallowed the showers of rain and rotating in a whirlwind he burst the clouds that bound him.

Jester. Oh, madman, wont you give it me? Or I shall shout for aid.

Madman. Shout away. Shout! scream! shout!

Jester. Help! help! sirs, an outrage!

Madman. I too will shout for aid. Indra is in bonds, sirs, Indra is in bonds!

Jester. Help! help! an outrage!

[*Voice behind the Scene.*]

Fear not, good brahman, do not fear.

Jester. [*Joyfully.*] When the moon rises all the stars are there. Brahman-hood is down in the world. It is a Buddhist monk with his good works that protects us.

[*Enter a Buddhist monk.*]

Monk. Fear not, good brahman, do not fear.

Who is there here? What's the matter? Why these shouts for help?

Jester. Dear me! This monk is playing the part of a gate-keeper. Good monk, O holy man, this madman has taken my bowl of sweetmeats and won't give it back.

Monk. Sweets! let me see them.

Madman. Have a look, have a look, mister Monk.

Monk. [*Spitting.*] Poh! Pst!

Jester. Oh, what bad luck I have! My sweets have reappeared in the madman's hands only to be spat on by this monk with his good works.

Monk. O reverend lunatic, return, return these sweetmeats, white as the foam of bubbling water, large and soft from many powderings, as sweet as mulled wine. Eat them not, lest they make you waste away.

Jester. Confound it, they have given me vintner's *laddūs* for sweetmeats.

Monk. Return, reverend lunatic, return them, I say. If you don't return them, I shall curse you.

Madman. Gently, please, holy monk. Don't you go cursing me. Take them, do!

Monk. Reverend brahman, just see my power.

Jester. This madman sees the pious monk is about to curse him, and there he stands with my bowl of sweetmeats on the tips of his fingers trembling with fear. Good madman, give back my bowl of sweets.

Monk. Come, sir, come. With these sweets you shall give me a blessing.

Jester. Ha! ha! Give you a blessing with my own. It was I that accepted them as a gift at the hands of a householder. I will offer them to you too. May you be prosperous. This madman is going towards the Fire Shrine. It is midday. This place will be deserted even before noon. I shall just go and deposit the gold pieces of my donations in a house by the way. One man wants my cloth, another my money.

[*They all enter the Fire Shrine.*]

Yaugandharāyaṇa. Vasantaka! Is this shrine empty?

Jester. Yes, sir, quite empty.

Yaugandharāyaṇa. Then let us embrace.

Both. Good! [*They embrace.*]

Yaugandharāyaṇa. Well. Well. You have both shown equal efforts. Sit down. You too.

Both. Very well.

[*They all sit down.*]

Yaugandharāyaṇa. Vasantaka, have you seen the king?

Jester. Ay, sir, I have seen his Highness.

Yaugandharāyaṇa. Alas! There is no security at night. Now we must wait for the day.¹

When the day is over, we look for the night: When the dawn is bright, we look forward to the day. Our satisfaction to see time ever passing, must see in troubles the advantages that are to come. (2)

Rumaṇvān. Well said. Though time is all alike, the night is full of obstructions. For

The night is a terror to foes who cannot succeed in their enterprises, or are unpopular in the world and find out their error in the morning. (3)

Yaugandharāyaṇa. Did you speak with the king?

Jester. Ay, sir, his Highness kept me a long while. To-day is the fourteenth day, and I attended him as he took his bath.

Yaugandharāyaṇa. Took his bath, you say?

Jester. Yes, his Highness has bathed.

Yaugandharāyaṇa. Did he worship the gods?

Jester. Ay, sir, with an obeisance only.

Yaugandharāyaṇa. It is excellent that the king has attained this state of convalescence. For

The joy drums were beaten as the noise of worship died away, when he had bathed and approached the deities: now by the power of Fate his fetters clank as he bows before the gods, worshipping on auspicious days. (4)

Rumaṇvān. Your efforts will soon enable the king to worship properly on the auspicious days.

Yaugandharāyaṇa. Vasantaka, go and see the king once more. And

¹ *atīkrānta-yogakṣemā-vātriḥ*. Verses 2 and 3 have more point at the end of the scene seem to be out of place here. They would where the company breaks up.

take him this message. To-morrow is the day to carry out that plan we discussed for our departure. The elephant Nalāgiri is to be infuriated in the regular old way with charms and herbs. We found a pretext for putting the herbs close to where he stands, takes his bath, has his feed, and lies down. Smoke is arranged for, to be started when the wind is the right way. To increase his rage the elephant opposite is in rut. A house near the stables, with nothing much in it, is to be set alight, for elephants, you know, are so fearful of fire. Conches and drums have been put in the temples to increase their terror. With all that din embodied in these devices to-morrow, Pradyota is sure to seek our master's aid. So by the very consent of his enemy he can come out of the prison, grasping the lute which shares his sorrows, and subdue the elephant. Then firmly seated on the back of Nalāgiri—

He will put the tusker to such speed that the troops can follow his hindquarters in imagination only, and he will leave the Vindhyan forest behind before the lions have finished roaring. In one day he will know three states, in jail, in the wood, and in his own city. He will escape as he was caught, by an elephantine stratagem. (5)

Rumaṇvān. What are you thinking about, Vasantaka?

Jester. I am thinking that all your mighty efforts will be in vain.

Both Ministers. We do not see that.

Jester. I see it first, you will see it afterwards.

Yaugandharāyaṇa. Why should our plan fail?

Jester. Because of the wilfulness of the Vatsa king.

Yaugandharāyaṇa. How do you mean?

Jester. You listen to me.

Both Ministers. We are all attention.

Jester. When the eighth day of last dark fortnight was over, her Ladyship the princess Vāsavadattā, accompanied by her nurse, went to worship at the shrine of the holy Yakshiṇī, which is opposite the prison gate. As a young girl, whom all might see in innocence, she was in an open palanquin. They had to skirt the high road, which was flooded with water from a choked-up drain.

Yaugandharāyaṇa. Go on.

Jester. That very day the king was outside the prison gate with the permission of an officer named Sivaka, the superintendent of the jail.

Yaugandharāyaṇa. Well?

Jester. Then the palanquin was halted for the men to change shoulders, and he saw the princess as clearly as you like.

Yaugandharāyaṇa. What then?

Jester. What then? you ask. Why, the prison has turned into a garden of delight and he is ready to play a comedy of passion.

Yaugandharāyaṇa. But surely the king cannot have fallen in love with her?

Jester. Troubles, sir, come in shoals. That is exactly what he has done.

Yaugandharāyaṇa. Rumaṇvān, my friend, steel your heart. We shall become old men in this disguise.

Jester. And, sir, he said to me: 'Tell Yaugandharāyaṇa the plan as arranged does not please me. I am thinking of a particular insult to Pradyota at the very moment of my departure. Do not think I am blinded by passion: I am seeking redress for my humiliation.'

Yaugandharāyaṇa. Oho! What a speech for the mockery of his foes! What consummate assurance! How distressing for his friends! The king desires delights at the wrong time and place. Verily,

The bare earth with a bed of straw made by his own hands
can still make him proud. He can find sustenance for love in
the jingle of the fetters on his feet. What prisoner would not
be ripe for love, if the men told off to guard him addressed him
as 'King'? (6)

Jester. Come, sir, our devotion is proved, we have done our manly best. Let us jolly well leave him and go home.

Yaugandharāyaṇa. Is this Vasantaka? Oh, Vasantaka, do not talk like that!

Shall we abandon one that is smitten by woe and by love, who
depends on his friends and cannot awake when he should? (7)

Jester. We shall go on like this till old age.

Yaugandharāyaṇa. That would be highly commendable.

Jester. It might be, if people knew about it.

Yaugandharāyaṇa. People are nothing to us. All our efforts are for our master's good.

Jester. Even he doesn't know.

Yaugandharāyaṇa. He will know in good time.

Jester. When will that good time come?

Yaugandharāyaṇa. When we succeed.

Jester. Then you must be able to take the king out of prison, and the princess out of the palace.

Rumaṇvān. There it is, you must see to it.

Yaugandharāyaṇa. Both! Very well, this is my second vow.

If the king does not carry her off, like Subhadra ravished by
Arjuna, or a lotus plant by an elephant, my name is not
Yaugandharāyaṇa. (8)

And again.

And I bear not away the one and the other, both the king and the long-eyed maid, I am not Yaugandharāyaṇa. (9)

[*Listening.*] Ah, some noise. See what it is.

Jester. Very well, Sir. [*Exit and re-enters.*] I can see people strolling about in crowds enjoying the evening air. What shall we do now?

Rumaṇvān. There are four doors to the Fire Shrine. Let us break up our meeting.

Yaugandharāyaṇa. No, no, not our meeting, let us break up the assembly of our foes. We must play our parts.

Both. So be it. [*Exeunt ambo.*]

Madman. Oho! the Demon is swallowing the moon. Let go, let go the moon, I say! If you don't, I'll smack you on the mouth and make you let go. Look, here is a mad horse running loose. Now he's at the cross-roads. I shall mount him and eat my alms. Here are the little masters. Beat me. No, don't you beat me. What do you say? dance a bit for you. Look, little masters, look. Oh, you little masters, beat me again with your sticks. Don't you beat me, or I will beat you.

[*Exit.*]

END OF THE THIRD ACT.

ACT IV

INTERLUDE

[*In Ujjain.*]

[*Enter a Soldier.*]

Soldier. The princess Vāsavadattā wishes to go bathing, and all this while I cannot find the page who attends her elephant, Bhadravati. Good Pushpadantaka, I cannot find the page-boy. What do you say? He has gone to the tavern and is drinking liquor. Well, you may go. [*Stepping round.*] Here is the liquor shop. I will just call him. Ho, page-boy! page-boy!

[*Voice behind the Scene.*]

Now who is this calling me on the high road, 'Page-boy! page-boy'!?

Soldier. Here comes the page, his eyes as red as China roses, full of liquor, laughing aloud and as drunk as drunk can be. I won't stand in his way. [*Stands aside.*]

[*Enter the Page as described.*]

Page. Now who is this calling me on the high road: 'Page-boy, page-boy!'? When I came out of the drinking-shop my father-in-law saw me, and full of wrath was he. Right into my mouth was popped a morsel of meat all seasoned with butter and pepper and salt, and a jug of good liquor as well. When the daughter-in-law is tight she falls love-sick, but the old woman raises the stick.

Blessed are they that are drunken with wine, blessed are they that are anointed with wine, blessed are they that have bathed in wine, blessed are they that are scuppered in wine. (2)

Wretched are those rich fools who hear the misery of their son's wives and never try a cask of liquor. So I know whether there's a hell or not in the world of the dead.

Soldier. [*Approaching.*] Ho, page-boy, I have been looking for you for an age! The princess Vāsavadattā wishes to go bathing, and her elephant is not to be found. You are drunk, and loafing round here.

Page. Quite right. She is tight, that man is tight, I am tight, and thou art tight—every mortal thing is tight.

Soldier. Never mind about every mortal thing. What are you loafing about here for, and why have not you brought back Bhadrapiṭhikā?

Page. Hence wander I, here I drink, herewith I drink, don't be cross. What's to be done?

Soldier. Stop that irrelevant chatter. Bring the elephant at once.

Page. Let her come, let her come. The trouble is, I have pawned her hook.

Soldier. What do you want a hook for? Bhadravati is so gentle by nature. Go and bring her at once.

Page. Let her come, let her come. The worst of it is, I have pawned her half-moon necklet.

Soldier. Bhadravati could be bound with flowers, what does she want a half-moon necklet for? Bring her along at once.

Page. Let her come, let her come. Only, alack-a-day! I have pawned her bell.

Soldier. She wants to play about in the water, what do you want a bell for? Bring her at once.

Page. Let her come. Alack, but I have pawned her whip.

Soldier. What do you want a whip for? Bring her at once, I say.

Page. She shall come, but alack!

Soldier. Alack what?

Page. Alack, I've been and—

Soldier. You've been and —?

Page. Alack-a-day! why Bhadra—

Soldier. Bhadra—?

Page. Yes, alack! Bhadravati.

Soldier. What about Bhadravati?

Page. I've pawned her too.

Soldier. You are not to blame, but the tavern-keeper who takes a royal mount for liquor.

Page. Alas! I told him—don't lose the interest on your capital.

Soldier. Ha! there is some noise.

Page. Alack! I know, I know. Bhadravati is breaking out of the tavern-keeper's house and running away.

Soldier. What do you say?

[*Voice in the air.*]

'His Majesty the King of the Vatsas has taken Vāsavadattā and departed.'

Page. [*Joyfully.*] May my master meet no obstacles!

Soldier. Now you may drink, and roam about as tipsy as you like.

Page. Ah, who is drunk with liquor or delight? Whose is this intoxication? We are the spies appointed each to our own place by Yaugandharāyaṇa. I will just give a signal to my friends. Here they are, running about like snakes that have just sloughed their skins. O, my friends, hearken to my words:

May the man who fights not in return for his master's salt have no new vessel filled with water, consecrated with its coat of *darbha* grass, but go to Hell.¹ (3)

But where is the noble Yaugandharāyaṇa? Ah, here is his lordship.

He has thrown aside his lunatic's disguise and donned many garments, swathing his head in a white turban; with a keen bright sword in his hand, while the left grasps a leather buckler embossed with gold, he looks like a lightning cloud with the edge of the moon just showing. (4)

Aha! a great fight has begun.

Slaying tuskers with their drivers and troopers with their chargers, plunging for a while forcibly into the mighty host, now his arm is broken by a pestle blow from the tusk of a giant elephant, and he has lost his weapon, but even so he holds his ground facing the foe. (5)

Alas, he is taken, the noble Yaugandharāyaṇa.

I must be at his side. [*Exit.*]

¹ This verse occurs in the Kauṭīliya-Artha-śāstra, x. iii. 68.

Soldier. What is this? All Kauśāmbī is here except the wall and the gatehouse. Well, I will report this business to the ministers. [*Exit.*]

END OF THE INTERLUDE.

[*Enter two Servants.*]

Together. Out of the way, out of the way, sirs, out of the way!

First Fellow. Ugh! my throat is bursting but I can't shout loud enough.

Second Fellow. Curse it all, what with all this excitement over the abduction of the princess Vāsavadattā, I may yell, but nobody hears me. Curse it, what do you say, 'What's the reason for clearing the road?' Yaugandharāyaṇa has been taken prisoner. 'How was he taken?' say you? Well, listen to me. For a moment with nothing but his sword he checked the first onrush of the army. But his sword failed him, struck by the tip of the tusk of the elephant, Beautiful in Victory. Through the fault of his sword he was taken, by no fault in his valour.

First Fellow. I say, you'd better take care. There's all Kauśāmbī here except the wall and the gatehouse.

Together. Get down, your honour, do get down!

[*Enter Yaugandharāyaṇa, carried on a plunk bed with his arms bound.*]

Yaugandharāyaṇa. Here I am.

Here am I, who rescued the Vatsa king from his enemies' hands. Though I was taken captive in the battle by the fault of my blade, I removed my master's trouble, so 'Victory!' say I, and enter the place with joy. (6)

It is an easy thing, Sir, for widowers to go and live in the forest. Affliction is pleasanter for those who have had their heart's desire. For those that have stored up merit, death brings no regret. For I, Disregarding enmity, fear, and insult alike, have accomplished my work with my designs, by self-control and arrows, ending the glory of the foe and the disgrace of my friends. Thereby have I won victory, the king himself, and great renown (7)

The Two Servants. Out of the way, out of the way, sirs, out of the way!

Yaugandharāyaṇa. No one wishing to see me should be driven aside.

Let the brave servants of the king gaze at me, brought to destruction by the force of my devotion to my king. This should strengthen or destroy the desire of those who pray in their hearts for the title of minister. (8)

Servants. Out of the way, out of the way. Have you never seen Yaugandharāyaṇa before?

Yaugandharāyaṇa. They have seen me before, but not like this.

Concealed in the guise of a madman running about in the streets my form is familiar, but now they will see my work. (9)

[*Enter the Soldier.*]

Soldier. Good news for you, sir. The Vatsa king has been captured.

Yaugandharāyaṇa. Impossible.

Freed long since from durance in the foeman's city, he has gained the forests on Bhadravati and escaped. Will he fall into captivity now, while the leagues pass in the twinkling of an eye? (10)

Did you hear, good sir, how he was taken?

Soldier. Pursued and overtaken by the Mountain of Reeds.

Yaugandharāyaṇa. The elephant could do it, but he is not properly handled.

It is by training a rider can draw out the speed of a tusk.

Who will ride him now the Vatsa king has left him? (11)

Soldier. Sir, the minister says, you are to be lodged in the arsenal. That place is guarded by our men.

Yaugandharāyaṇa. Oh, what a ridiculous order!

When watch and ward were needed on every side, after fastening in that fire, that we call the Vatsa king, then your ministers were fast asleep. Now the jewel is gone, why lock up the case? (12)

[*They walk round.*]

Soldier. Here is the arsenal. Pray enter, your honour.

[*Enter another Soldier.*]

Second Soldier. The minister's orders. Remove his fetters.

Yaugandharāyaṇa. Give me that relief. Bharatarohaka evidently wishes to see me. And I want to see him,

With his spirit depressed by my words, maddened by anger, defeated when my stratagems were started and devoid of valid counter-schemes, ignorant of the good counsels in the Treatises, overcome by a greater intelligence, with his face down-cast from shame like a wrestler knocked out by a counter-stroke. (13)

[*Enter Bharatarohaka.*]

Bharatarohaka. Where is he, where is Yaugandharāyaṇa?

He carried out his duty by deception, it is painful to look at him, and how shall I upbraid him now that he is ruined for his master's sake? For a long time his work was hampered,

but his plans were well directed. Like an angry snake that is overpowered, he kept raising his head. (14)

Soldier. Yaugandharāyaṇa is waiting for your honour in the arsenal.
Bharatarohaka. Very well.

Craftily outwitted in his ministry by the blue elephant, he is waiting now to reproach me with that hostile act. (15)

Soldier. Your honour, here is the minister.

Bharatarohaka. [*Approaching.*] Hail, Yaugandharāyaṇa.

Yaugandharāyaṇa. Hail.

Soldier. Ah! what a deep voice! The whole place is filled with his one word.

Bharatarohaka. [*Sitting down.*] The name 'Yaugandharāyaṇa' is familiar, sir, but not the person. I am glad to see you.

Yaugandharāyaṇa. You are glad to see me, say you? Gaze at me.

My limbs you see are smeared with blood, in keeping with the usage of a warrior, but I am calm as Droṇa's son after he had slain the murderer of his father. (16)

Bharatarohaka. Ah! the self-esteem of one whose ruse with an elephant succeeded through trickery.

Yaugandharāyaṇa. Through trickery, say you? Now you may well say that.

What of that fraud with an elephant constructed under the *sāl* and *mallikā* trees, and our king lying bound on the ground with his arm for a pillow? And it is fraud, forsooth, if my king by his skill can charm a wild elephant with his lute! No blame to me if I follow your lead. (17)

Bharatarohaka. But, Yaugandharāyaṇa, to take the daughter of Mahāsena as a pupil and carry her off unplighted, without the fire as witness, was that robbery worthy of you?

Yaugandharāyaṇa. Nay, say not so. My master has married her.

Born in the Bharata house, the valiant Lord of the Vatsas, will he give a girl instruction and not the title of wife? (18)

Bharatarohaka. Then again Mahāsena has shown kindness to the Vatsa king. Why does n't he consider that?

Yaugandharāyaṇa. Nay, speak not thus.

If the Mountain of Reeds obeys his command he does but bide by the words of the skilled. So your master liberated mine to save his own skin and give life and glory to his friends. (19)

Bharatarohaka. If, as you say, he was only released to capture Nalāgiri, your master was not imprisoned afterwards.

Yaugandharāyaṇa. No, he sees to that from fear of being reproached with ingratitude.

Bharatarohaka. They say, sir, you are well known for your learning in the Law of States. What does the *śāstra* enjoin for enemies defeated in battle?

Yaugandharāyaṇa. Death.

Bharatarohaka. If the Vatsa king was deserving of death why did we treat him well?

Yaugandharāyaṇa. It was in consideration of the fact that he did not carry off your king himself.

Bharatarohaka. Your master thinks even that was possible?

Yaugandharāyaṇa. Of course.

Your king was in the hollow of his hand, yet my king in his virtue spared him. Unless one rides the lord of elephants the standard will not fall. (20)

Bharatarohaka. Very well, but in all these hostile acts against Mahāsena what was your idea with regard to Kauśāmbī?

Yaugandharāyaṇa. Oh, what an absurd question!

In spite of you all he has gone, why talk of future actions?

When a tree is uprooted, why toil to lop its branches? (21)

[*Enter a Chamberlain.*]

Chamberlain. [*Whispering.*] That's how it is.

Bharatarohaka. Speak out loud.

Chamberlain. 'Though many wives were used, you did no wrong.

I have no quarrel with your qualities, pray accept the chalice.' (22)

That's the message.

Yaugandharāyaṇa. Ah me!

The houses I had fired still smoulder, so it is with the hearts of ministers. Here am I honoured, who should be punished, while the best honour for an offender is death. (23)

[*Lamentations are heard behind the scene.*]

Bharatarohaka. Ah!

What is this noise arising suddenly from the palace roof, like the screaming of ospreys¹ attacked by a falcon? (24)

Just find out what it is.

Chamberlain. As your honour commands. [*Exit and re-enters.*]

Her Majesty, Aṅgāravatī, with her heart overwhelmed by grief, wished to throw herself down from the palace, but Mahāsena addressed her

¹ *Kurari*. But would a falcon attack ospreys? Sarup suggests 'doves'. Another reading is *sārasānām*, 'cranes'.

with these words: 'Thy daughter has been married by the law of the warrior caste. Why now dost thou grieve on an occasion for rejoicing? So let us celebrate the ceremony of marriage between the Vatsa king and Vāsavadattā painted in a picture.' So now,

All of a sudden the women are performing the auspicious rite,
the proper order disordered by delight, and the things they use
for luck are wet with tears of joy. (25)

Yaugandharāyaṇa. So Mahāsena considers it an alliance by marriage. Then hand me the chalice.

Chamberlain. Pray accept it. [*Offers him the chalice.*]

Bharatarohaka. What further favour, sir, shall Mahāsena bestow on you?

Yaugandharāyaṇa. If Mahāsena is pleased with me, what else should I desire?

EPILOGUE

May the kine be without blemish¹ and, subduing the sovereignty of his foes, may our Lion King rule over this earth in its entirety!

¹ Sarup prefers 'May the regions be free from dust'. *Go* is sometimes used in the meaning of 'the earth'.

THE VISION OF VĀSAVADATTĀ

(*Śvapna-Vāsavadattam*)

INTRODUCTION

AFTER eloping with Vāsavadattā the Avanti princess, the Vatsa king, Udayana, began to neglect the affairs of his state. He had, as far as he could tell, made a bitter enemy of Pradyota-Mahāsena, king of Ujjain, by robbing him of his daughter. Some king or general named Āruṇi invaded the Vatsa kingdom.

In these straits the only remedy the Vatsa ministers could see was an alliance with the powerful state of Magadha, and the best way of effecting this was to marry their king to the Princess Padmāvatī, sister of Darśaka, the king of Magadha. The only obstacle was Udayana's devotion to Vāsavadattā.

So the minister, Yaugandharāyaṇa, concocts a plot, with the co-operation of the Queen Vāsavadattā herself. One day, while the king is away on a hunting expedition, the royal pavilion in a frontier village, Lāvāṇaka, is burnt down. A rumour is spread that Vāsavadattā and Yaugandharāyaṇa have both perished in the fire, whereas they have really slipped away to Magadha disguised as pilgrims.

In the first act the queen and minister are on their way, and passing by a forest hermitage, meet the retinue of the Magadhan princess, Padmāvatī. She has been to visit the queen-mother, Mahādevī. The princess, Padmāvatī, is to stay one night at the hermitage, and has it proclaimed that any one there may claim a boon. This is the minister's opportunity to put Vāsavadattā into the security of the Magadhan court. He pretends that she is his sister, and asks the princess to take her as a ward. His request is granted.

Then a student of theology wanders by and tells the story of the fire of Lāvāṇaka and of the king's great grief. When he leaves, it is evening and they all retire to the hermitage. (ACT I.)

In the next act we find Vāsavadattā at Magadha. The Princess Padmāvatī and her ladies are playing at ball in the palace garden. They talk of Udayana, and Vāsavadattā nearly gives herself away. Then a nurse enters and announces that Padmāvatī is betrothed to Udayana, and that the wedding must take place that very day.

'The more they hasten', says Vāsavadattā to herself, 'the deeper the gloom in my heart'. (ACT II.)

Vāsavadattā comes alone to the garden, while the preparations for the wedding are going on. But a maid comes with a request from the queen, and Vāsavadattā must needs plait the wedding garland for her husband's second marriage. (ACT III.)

The new queen, Padmāvatī, wanders in the garden with her train, including Vāsavadattā. King Udayana and his Jester come into the same garden. The ladies hide in a bower for Vāsavadattā's sake. The gentlemen sit down at the entrance, and the ladies cannot avoid overhearing their conversation. The king admits his heart is still bound to Vāsavadattā, and bursts into tears. Padmāvatī goes to comfort him, and he leaves to attend a court reception. (ACT IV.)

In an interlude we learn the young queen, Padmāvatī, is ill. Then Udayana goes to see her in the 'sea-room'. He finds the bed untouched, sits down to wait, and, musing on Vāsavadattā, falls asleep. Vāsavadattā, coming in the half-light to tend the young queen, takes Udayana's form to be Padmāvatī's. Resting on the bed, she finds it is her husband talking in his sleep, as he dreams of her. As she slips away, he wakes and catches a glimpse of her. Rushing after her, he runs against the door, and the Jester returning half persuades him it was all a dream. News comes that the other minister, Rumaṇvān, has brought a large army to defeat Āruṇi. (ACT V.)

The scene of the next act is Kauśāmbī. The Vatsa kingdom has been recovered. An interlude tells us that Udayana's grief has been renewed by the recovery of his lute. (It seems he must have dropped it on the banks of the Narmadā.) Then while the king mourns his lost love, messengers arrive from Ujjain to say that all is forgiven. Their majesties of Ujjain from the very first had intended Udayana to be their son-in-law, and they sent the painted portraits used as proxies in the wedding ceremony. Padmāvatī notices the resemblance of Vāsavadattā's picture to the 'Lady of Avantī' entrusted to her care.

Yaugandharāyaṇa in disguise comes to claim his 'sister'. All is revealed. The ministers are forgiven for their deceit, and the king decides to visit Ujjain, taking both the queens. (ACT VI.)

The general plot belongs to the old story.

The principal dramatic incident that gives its name to the play is the momentary vision of Vāsavadattā when Udayana wakes from a dream of her. (ACT V.)

The main feature of the play is the delicacy with which the feelings of Vāsavadattā are indicated.

DRAMATIS PERSONAE

(In order of appearance.)

Stage-manager, Sūtradhāra—in Prologue only.

Two guards in the retinue of Princess Padmāvatī.

YAUGANDHARĀYAṆA, Chief Minister of Udayana, king of the Vatsas.

VĀSAVADATTĀ, Princess of Ujjain, daughter of King Pradyota-Mahāsena, and the first Queen of Udayana, supposed to have been burnt alive and brought to Magadha in disguise as the Lady of Avantī.

Chamberlain } from Magadha with Princess Padmāvatī.
Maid }

PADMĀVATĪ, Princess of Magadha, sister of King Darśaka. In the last three acts the second queen of Udayana.

Lady hermit.

Student of theology.

Nurse of the princess of Magadha.

Second maid, of the princess of Magadha.

Jester (Vasantaka) of King Udayana.

UDAYANA, king of the Vatsas.

Padminikā } Maids in attendance on the princess of Magadha.
Madhukarikā }

Chamberlain of the Vatsa king at Kauśāmbī.

Vijayā, Portress at Kauśāmbī palace.

Raibhya, Chamberlain from the Avantī court at Ujjain.

Vasundharā, nurse of Vāsavadattā from Ujjain.

PROLOGUE

[*At the end of the Opening* ¹ *enter the stage-manager.*]

Stage-manager. May the arms of Balarāma ² protect thee, arms as fair as the young moon at its rising, ³ given their full vigour by wine, ⁴ full of Beauty ⁵ incarnate, and lovely as Spring. (1)

[*By paronomasia this verse introduces the names of Udayana, Vāsavadattā, Padmāvatī, and Vasantaka.*]

With these words, my lords and gentlemen, I have to announce to you . . . But what is that? I thought I heard a noise, just as I was to make my announcement. Well, I must see what it is.

[*Voice behind the scene.*]

Out of the way, there! Away, sirs, out of the way.

Stage-manager. So be it. I understand.

The devoted servitors of the King of Magadha, escorting their princess, are sternly driving aside everybody they meet in the Grove of Penance. (2) [*Exit.*]

END OF PROLOGUE.

ACT I

[*Forest road near a hermitage.*]

[*Enter two guards.*]

Guards. Out of the way! Away, sirs, out of the way!

[*Enter Yaugandharāyaṇa, disguised as a religious mendicant, and Vāsavadattā in the garb of a lady of Avantī.*]

Yaugandharāyaṇa. [*Listening.*] What? Even here are people driven aside? For,

These grave seniors, dwellers in the hermitage, content with woodland fruits and clad in bark, worthy of all respect, are being terrified.

Who is this insolent fellow, this lack-courtesy, made arrogant

¹ Nāndī, see note on p. ix.

² Bala, Baladeva, or Balarāma, the third Rāma and elder brother of Kṛishṇa. He was fair and a great lover of wine.

³ Meaning 'at eventide', for the new moon rising is invisible, but this is an artificial stanza where *Udaya* 'rising' had to come in to give us *Udayana* the hero's

name.

⁴ This is an appropriate sense, though the construction is rather forced *āsava-datta-ā-balau*, i. e. *ā samantād*. The easier way 'with weakness given by liquor' is not appropriate to protecting arms.

⁵ *Padmā*, the wife of *Vishṇu*, Goddess of Beauty.

by fickle fortune, who by his rough commands is turning
a peaceful penance-grove into a village street? (3)

Vāsavadattā. Who is it, sir, that turns us aside?

Yaugandharāyaṇa. One who turns aside his own soul from righteousness.

Vāsavadattā. Nay, sir, that is not what I would say. Am I to be driven aside?

Yaugandharāyaṇa. Even the gods, lady, are rejected unawares.

Vāsavadattā. Ah! sir, fatigue is not so distressing as this humiliation.

Yaugandharāyaṇa. This is something your Highness has enjoyed and then given up. It should not trouble you. For,

Aforetime thou also didst obtain thy heart's desire;¹ with the
victory of thy lord thou wilt once more attain an exalted
state. The series of worldly fortunes revolves with the march
of time like the spokes in a wheel. (4)

Guards. Out of the way, sirs, out of the way!

[*Enter the Chamberlain.*]

Chamberlain. No, Sambhashaka, no, you must not drive these people
aside. Look you,

Bring no reproach on the King. Show no harshness to the
inmates of a hermitage. These high-minded men make their
home in the forest to escape from the brutalities of a town. (5)

Guards. Very well, sir. [*Exeunt.*]

Yaugandharāyaṇa. Why, he seems to be an enlightened person.

[*To Vāsavadattā*] Come, child, let us approach him.

Vāsavadattā. As you please, sir.

Yaugandharāyaṇa. [*Approaching.*] Oh, sir, what is the reason of this
hustling?

Chamberlain. Ah! good hermit.

Yaugandharāyaṇa. [*Aside.*] 'Hermit', of course, is an honourable form
of address, but as I am not used to it, it does not please me.

Chamberlain. Hearken, good sir. Padmāvati is here, sister to our great
king, named by his parents Darśaka. She has been to visit the queen-
mother, Mahādevī, who has made her home in a hermitage, and having
taken leave of that noble lady, is on her way to Rājagriha. So to-day
she is pleased to stay in this hermitage. Therefore,

You may fetch from the forest, at your sweet will, holy water,
fuel, flowers, and sacred grass. The king's daughter is a friend
of piety, she would not wish your pious duties to be hindered.
Such is the tradition of her family. (6)

¹ 'You have already given your consent. This was the only course of action.' (L.S.)

Yaugandharāyaṇa. [*Aside.*] So this is the Padmāvati, princess of Magadha, who, the soothsayers Pushpaka, Bhadraka, and others have predicted, is destined to become the consort of my royal master.

Aversion or respect arise from one's purpose. Because I am so eager to see her wedded to my master, I am inspired with great devotion. (7)

Vāsavadattā. [*Aside.*] Hearing that she is a princess, I too feel for her a sisterly affection.

[*Enter Padmāvati with her retinue and a maid.*]

Maid. Come this way, please, princess. Here is the hermitage, be pleased to enter.

[*A lady-hermit is discovered, seated.*]

Lady-hermit. Princess, you are most welcome.

Vāsavadattā. [*Aside.*] This is the princess. Her beauty proclaims indeed her noble birth.

Padmāvati. Reverend lady, I salute you.

Lady-hermit. Long may you live. Come in, my child, come in. A hermitage is indeed the guest's own home.

Padmāvati. So it is, your reverence. I feel quite at home, and grateful to you for your kind words.

Vāsavadattā. [*Aside.*] Her words are as sweet as her looks.

Lady-hermit. [*To the maid.*] My good girl, has no king as yet sought the hand of your blessed sovereign's sister?

Maid. Yes, there is King Pradyota of Ujjain. He has sent an ambassador on behalf of his son.

Vāsavadattā. [*Aside.*] I am glad to hear it. And now she has become one of my own dear people.

Lady-hermit. Such loveliness well deserves this honour. We have heard that both are mighty royal families.

Padmāvati. [*To the Chamberlain.*] Sir, have you found any hermits that will do us the favour of accepting our gifts? Distribute according to their heart's desire and demand, by proclamation, what any man would have.

Chamberlain. As your ladyship desires. Hearken, ye saintly men, dwelling in the hermitage, hearken to my words. Her Highness, the Princess of Magadha, is gratified by your cordial welcome, and invites you to accept her gifts that she may gain religious merit.

Who, then, needs a beggar's bowl? Who requires a robe? Some student whose studies are complete, according to the Rule, what fee would he have to offer his preceptor? The princess, devoted to those that delight in law, requests you as

a favour to herself, whatever any one desires let him declare it, what shall be given to-day and to whom? (8)

Yaugandharāyaṇa. [*Aside.*] Ah, I see my opportunity.

[*Aloud.*] Sir, I ask a boon.

Padmāvatī. Happily my visit to this penance-grove is fruitful.

Lady-hermit. Everybody in this hermitage is contented. This must be some stranger.

Chamberlain. Well, sir, what can we do for you?

Yaugandharāyaṇa. This is my sister. Her husband has gone abroad. My wish is that her Highness would take my sister under her protection for some time. For,

No need have I of wealth, or of worldly joys, or of fine raiment, nor have I donned the orange robe to gain a livelihood. The royal maid is wise and knoweth well the path of duty. She can well protect the virtue of my sister. (9)

Vāsavadattā. [*Aside.*] So! the noble Yaugandharāyaṇa is determined to leave me here. Be it so, he will not act without reflection.

Chamberlain. Lady! His expectation is great indeed. How can we consent? For,

Wealth it would be easy to give, or one's life, or the fruit of austerity. Anything else would be easy, but hard is the guarding of a pledge. (10)

Padmāvatī. My lord, after first making our proclamation—what would any one have?—it is improper to hesitate. Whatever he says, must be done.

Chamberlain. These words are worthy of your Highness.

Maid. Long live the princess, who keeps her word.

Lady-hermit. Long life to you, blessed lady!

Chamberlain. Very well, my lady. [*Approaching Yaugandharāyaṇa.*] Reverend sir, her Highness accepts the guardianship of your sister.

Yaugandharāyaṇa. I am much indebted to her Highness.

[*To Vāsavadattā.*] My child! Approach her Highness.

Vāsavadattā. [*Aside.*] There is no escape. I will go, unfortunate that I am.

Padmāvatī. Yes, come hither. Now you belong to me.

Lady-hermit. She looks to me like the daughter of a king.

Maid. You are right, reverend mother. I, too, can see that she has known better days.

Yaugandharāyaṇa. [*Aside.*] Ah! half my task is ended. Things are turning out just as it was arranged with the other ministers. When my royal master is reinstalled and Vāsavadattā is restored to him, her

Highness, the Princess of Magadha, will be my surety for her. For, indeed,

Those who first predicted our troubles, foretold that Padmāvati was destined to become the consort of my king. On that prophecy I have relied in acting as I did, for fate does not transgress the words of well-tried oracles. (11)

[*Enter a Student of Theology.*]

Student. [*Looking upwards.*] It is midday and I am tired out. Where shall I take a rest? [*Turning about.*] Good, there must be a penance-grove nearby, because

The deer are quietly grazing, free from fear, in a place where they feel safe. All the trees, tended with loving care, have their branches loaded with fruit and blossom. There is a great wealth of tawny kine, but no fields are tilled on any side. Undoubtedly it is a penance-grove, for this smoke arises from many an altar. (12)

I will go in. [*Entering.*] Hallo! This person is out of keeping with a hermitage. [*Looking in another direction.*] But there are also hermits. There is no harm in proceeding further. Oh! ladies!

Chamberlain. Come in, sir, with perfect freedom, sir. A hermitage is indeed common to all.

Vāsavadattā. How now!

Padmāvati. Oho! this lady shuns the sight of strangers. Very well, I must take good care of my ward.

Chamberlain. Sir, we were here first. Please accept our hospitality to a guest.

Student. [*Drinks.*] Thank you. Now I am refreshed.

Yaugandharāyaṇa. Sir, whence have you come? whither are you going, and where is your abode?

Student. I will tell you, sir. I am from Rājagṛīha. In order to specialize in Vedic studies, I took up my abode in Lāvāṇaka; it's a village in the Vatsa country.

Vāsavadattā. [*Aside.*] Ah! Lāvāṇaka! At the mention of that name my anguish seems renewed.

Yaugandharāyaṇa. And have you completed your studies?

Student. No, not yet.

Yaugandharāyaṇa. If you have not finished your studies, why have you returned?

Student. A terrible catastrophe has happened there.

Yaugandharāyaṇa. What was that?

Student. There was a king there named Udayana.

Yaugandharāyaṇa. I have heard of his Highness. What about him?

Student. He was passionately enamoured of his queen, Vāsavadattā, a princess of Avantī.

Yaugandharāyaṇa. Quite possible. What then?

Student. When the king had gone out hunting the village took fire, and she was burnt alive.

Vāsavadattā. [*Aside.*] Untrue, untrue, I am living still, poor wretch!

Yaugandharāyaṇa. Well, go on.

Student. Then in attempting to rescue her a minister named Yaugandharāyaṇa fell into the flames himself.

Yaugandharāyaṇa. Did he really? Well, what then?

Student. Then the king came back, and when he heard the news he was distracted with grief at their separation, and wanted to end his life in that very fire. It was all the ministers could do to hold him back.

Vāsavadattā. [*Aside.*] Yes, I know my lord's tender feelings for me.

Yaugandharāyaṇa. And then?

Student. The king clasped to his breast the half-burnt ornaments that had adorned her person and fell down unconscious.

All. Alas!

Vāsavadattā. [*Aside*] And now I hope the noble Yaugandharāyaṇa is satisfied.

Maid. Princess, this noble lady is in tears.

Padmāvatī. She must be very tender-hearted.

Yaugandharāyaṇa. Quite so, quite so. My sister is tender-hearted by nature. What happened then?

Student. Then, by degrees, he regained consciousness.

Padmāvatī. Thank goodness, he is alive. The words 'fell down unconscious' took my breath away.

Yaugandharāyaṇa. Well, proceed.

Student. Then the king suddenly got up, his body stained with dust from rolling on the ground, and burst into lamentation after lamentation. 'Oh! Vāsavadattā—Princess of Avantī—Alas, my beloved—my darling pupil—oh!' and so on and so on. In short,

No love birds¹ so lament their loss, nor even those that are bereft of fairy brides.² Happy the woman who is thus loved by her lord: consumed by fire, but by reason of her husband's love not consumed by woe.³ (13)

¹ Lit. Cakravāka birds, symbols of conjugal fidelity, supposed to be separated after every sunset.

² *stri-viśeṣaiḥ*, probably referring to Pu-

rūrava's lament for the Nymph Urvaśi.

³ *adagdhā*, 'not burned'. [Immortalized. L. S.]

Yaugandharāyaṇa. But tell me, sir, was none of his ministers at pains to comfort him ?

Student. Yes, there was a minister named Rumaṇvān who did his very best to console him.

Like the king he will touch no food, his face is wasted by ceaseless weeping. Depressed by sorrow like his lord, he neglects the care of his person. Day and night he attends untiring on the king. Should the king suddenly depart this life, he also will expire. (14)

Vāsavadattā. [*Aside.*] Happily my lord is in good hands.

Yaugandharāyaṇa. [*Aside.*] What a heavy responsibility Rumaṇvān has to bear ! For,

My burden has been lightened, his toil is constant. Everything depends on him, on whom the king himself depends. (15)

[*Aloud.*] Well, sir, by this time is the king consoled ?

Student. That I do not know.

The ministers left the village, taking with them—after great difficulty—the king, who was pouring out a piteous tale. ‘Here it was that I laughed with her, here I talked with her, here I sat with her, here we fell out, and here I passed the night with her’, and so forth. With the departure of the king the village became desolate like the sky when the moon and stars have set. Then I, too, came away.

Lady-hermit. He must indeed be a noble king who is praised like this even by a stranger.

Maid. What think you, princess, will he offer his hand to another woman ?

Padmāvati. [*Aside.*] My heart was asking that very question.

Student. Let me take leave of you. I must be going.

Both. Go, and fare you well.

Student. Thank you. [*Exit.*]

Yaugandharāyaṇa. Good. I too wish to go if her Highness permits.

Chamberlain. The holy hermit wishes to depart with your Highness’s permission.

Padmāvati. This gentleman’s sister will feel lonely in his absence.

Yaugandharāyaṇa. She is in good hands, she will not repine.

[*To the chamberlain.*] Pray let me go.

Chamberlain. Very well, we shall meet again.

Yaugandharāyaṇa. I hope so. [*Exit.*]

Chamberlain. It is time now to go within.

Padmāvati. Reverend lady, I salute you.

Lady-hermit. My child, may you get a husband as good as yourself.

Vāsavadattā. Reverend lady, I too salute you.

Lady-hermit. And you also, may you soon find your husband.

Vāsavadattā. I thank you.

Chamberlain. Come, please, this way. This way, my lady. For now, The birds have returned to their nests. The hermits have plunged into the stream. Fires have been lit and are burning brightly, smoke is spreading in the penance-grove. The sun has dropped a long way down, gathering his rays together he turns his chariot and slowly descends on the summit of the western mountain. (16)

[*Exeunt omnes.*]

END OF THE FIRST ACT.

ACT II

INTERLUDE

[*Palace garden at Mugadha.*]

[*Enter a Maid.*]

Maid. Kunjarikā, Kunjarikā! Where, O where is the Princess Padmāvati?

What do you say? 'The princess is playing at ball near the jasmine bower.'¹ Very good, I shall go to her. [*Turning and looking around.*] Ah! here comes the princess playing with a ball. The jewels in her ears are turned upwards; the exertion has spangled her brow with tiny drops of perspiration, so that fatigue lends a charm to her face. I will go and meet her. [*Exit.*]

END OF THE INTERLUDE.

[*Enter Padmāvati, playing with a ball, accompanied by her retinue and Vāsavadattā.*]

Vāsavadattā. Here is your ball, my dear.

Padmāvati. Dear lady! Now that is enough.

Vāsavadattā. You have played over long with your ball, my dear. Your hands are quite red, they might belong to somebody else.²

Maid. Play on, princess, play on. Enjoy these charming days of girlhood while you may.

¹ She hears a voice off the stage.

² Suggesting the palms dyed for marriage.

Padmāvati. What's in your thoughts, dear lady? I think you are laughing at me.

Vāsavadattā. No, no, my dear. You are looking more beautiful than ever to-day. I am getting a full view as it were of your pretty face.¹

Padmāvati. Away with you! Don't you make fun of me.

Vāsavadattā. Well, I am mute—O daughter-in-law elect of Mahāsena!

Padmāvati. Who, pray, is this Mahāsena?

Vāsavadattā. There is a king of Ujjain, named Pradyota, who is called Mahāsena on account of the vast size of his army.

Maid. It is not with that king the princess wishes to be related.

Vāsavadattā. Whom does she want, then?

Maid. There is a king of the Vatsas named Udayana. It is of his virtues that the princess is enamoured.

Vāsavadattā. [*Aside.*] She wants my noble lord as her husband. [*Aloud.*] For what reason?

Maid. He is so tender-hearted—that's why.

Vāsavadattā. [*Aside.*] I know, I know. I, too, fell in love with him like that.

Maid. But, princess, suppose the king is ugly.

Vāsavadattā. No, no. He is very handsome.

Padmāvati. How do you know that, dear lady?

Vāsavadattā. [*Aside.*] Partiality to my lord has made me transgress the bounds of propriety. What shall I do now? Yes, I see—[*Aloud.*] That is what everybody says in Ujjain, my dear.

Padmāvati. Quite so. He is not, of course, inaccessible to the people of Ujjain, and beauty fascinates the hearts of all.

[*Enter a Nurse.*]

Nurse. Victory to the princess! Princess, you are betrothed.

Vāsavadattā. To whom, good lady?

Nurse. To Udayana, the king of the Vatsas.

Vāsavadattā. Is he in good health, that king?

Nurse. He arrived here quite well, and the princess is betrothed to him.

Vāsavadattā. Alack-a-day!

Nurse. Alack-a-day! Why, what's the matter?

Vāsavadattā. Oh, nothing. His grief was so great, and now he is indifferent.

Nurse. Madam, the hearts of great men are ruled by the Sacred Scriptures, and are therefore easy to console.

Vāsavadattā. Good lady, tell me, did he choose her himself?

Nurse. Oh, no. He came here on some other business, when our king

¹ There is a *double entendre*. Suggesting 'a husband's face'.

observed his nobility, wisdom, youth, and beauty, he offered her hand of his own accord.

Vāsavadattā. [*Aside.*] Just so. Thus my lord is without reproach.

[*Enter another Maid.*]

Second Maid. Make haste, madam. Our queen declares that the conjunction of stars is auspicious to-day, and the nuptial celebrations must take place this very day.

Vāsavadattā. [*Aside.*] The more they hasten, the deeper the gloom in my heart.

Nurse. Come, your Highness, come.

[*Exeunt omnes.*]

END OF THE SECOND ACT.

ACT III

[*Palace Garden.*]

[*Enter Vāsavadattā, deep in thought.*]

Vāsavadattā. I have left Padmāvati in the ladies' court, with its festive wedding crowd of women, and have come here alone to this pleasure garden. Here I can give vent to the sorrow which fate has laid upon me. [*Walking about.*] Alas! I am undone. Even my noble lord now belongs to another woman. Let me sit down. [*Sits down.*] Blessed indeed is the Love-bird.¹ Parted from her mate she ceases to live. But I cannot escape from life. Miserable that I am, I live on in the hope of seeing him again.

[*Enter a Maid carrying flowers.*]

Maid. Where has the noble lady of Avantī gone? [*Turning and looking around.*] Ah, there she is, sitting on a stone bench under the *priyaṅgu* creeper. There she sits, wearing a graceful garment unadorned, her mind intent on distant thoughts, looking like a digit of the moon obscured by mist. I will go up to her. [*Approaching.*] Noble lady of Avantī, I have been seeking you for ever so long.

Vāsavadattā. What for?

Maid. What our queen says is this: 'The lady comes from a noble family, she is kind and skilful. So let her plait this wedding garland.'

Vāsavadattā. And for whom is it to be made?

Maid. For our princess.

Vāsavadattā. [*Aside.*] Must I do even this? The Gods are indeed cruel.

¹ *Lit.* Female Cakravāka, see note p. 45.

Maid. Madam, there is no time now to think of other things. The bridegroom is taking his bath in the inlaid room,¹ so please plait the garland quickly.

Vāsavadattā. [*Aside.*] I can think of nothing else. [*Aloud.*] My good girl, have you seen the bridegroom?

Maid. Yes, I have seen him. That was through affection for the princess and my own curiosity.

Vāsavadattā. What is he like?

Maid. Oh, madam, I tell you, I never saw any one like him.

Vāsavadattā. Well, tell me, tell me, my dear, is he handsome?

Maid. One might say the God of Love himself, without the bow and arrows.

Vāsavadattā. Thanks, that will do.

Maid. Why do you stop me?

Vāsavadattā. It is improper to listen to any one singing the praises of another woman's husband.

Maid. Then please finish the garland as quickly as you can.

Vāsavadattā. I shall do it at once. Give me the flowers.

Maid. Here they are. Please take them.

Vāsavadattā. [*Turns out the basket and examines the flowers.*] What is the name of this plant?

Maid. It is called 'Lords and Ladies'.²

Vāsavadattā. [*Aside.*] I must work in lots of this for myself and Padmāvatī. [*Aloud.*] What do you call this flower?

Maid. Oh, that is 'Old Wife's Bane'.³

Vāsavadattā. We needn't use that one.

Maid. Why not?

Vāsavadattā. His wife is dead, so it wouldn't be any use.

[*Enter another Maid.*]

Second Maid. Please make haste, madam. The ladies of living lords are conducting the bridegroom to the ladies' court.

Vāsavadattā. There, it's ready, I tell you. Take it.

First Maid. How beautiful! Madam, I must be off.

[*Exeunt the two maids.*]

Vāsavadattā. She is gone. Alas! All is over.

My noble lord is now another's. Heaven help me! I'll to bed; it may soothe my pain, if I can sleep. [*Exit.*]

END OF THE THIRD ACT.

¹ *Mañi-bhūmi*, 'inlaid floor'.

² *Lit.* 'Co-wife's ruin.'

³ *Lit.* 'Antidote to widow-hood'.

ACT IV
INTERLUDE

[*Palace at Magadha*]

[*Enter the Jester.*]

Jester. [*Joyfully.*] Ha! ha! How good to see the delightful time of the auspicious and welcome marriage of His Highness the king of the Vatsas. Who could have known that after being hurled into such a whirlpool of misfortune, we should rise again to the surface. Now we live in palaces, we bathe in the tanks of the inner court, we eat dainty and delicious dishes of sweetmeats—in short, I feel myself to be in Paradise, except that there are no nymphs to keep me company. But there is one great drawback. I do not digest my food at all well. Even on the downiest couches I cannot sleep, for I seem to see the Wind and Blood disease circling round. Bah! there is no happiness in life, if you are full of ailments, or without a good breakfast.

[*Enter a Maid.*]

Maid. Wherever has the worthy Vasantaka got to?

[*Turning and looking around.*] Why, here he is! [*Going up to him.*] Oh, Master Vasantaka, what a search I have had looking for you!

Jester. [*With a leer.*] And why were you searching for me, my dear?

Maid. Our queen says, 'hasn't the bridegroom finished his bath?'

Jester. Why does she want to know?

Maid. So that I may bring him a garland and unguents, of course.

Jester. His Highness has bathed. You may bring everything except food.

Maid. Why do you bar food?

Jester. Unfortunate that I am, like the rolling of cuckoo's eyes . . . my stomach is like that.

Maid. May you ever be as you are!

Jester. Off with you! I will go and attend on his Highness.

[*Exeunt ambo.*]

END OF INTERLUDE.

[*Palace garden.*]

[*Enter Padmāvati with her retinue and Vāsavadattā dressed as a lady of Avantī.*]

Maid. What has brought your ladyship to this pleasure-garden?

Padmāvati. My dear, I want to see if the *seoli*¹ clusters have flowered or not.

¹ *Seoli*, a modern form of *Śephālūkā* = and orange flower which falls in the morning.
Nyctanthes Arbor Tristis—with a white

Maid. Yes, princess, they have, with blossoms like pendants of pearls interset with coral.

Padmāvati. If that is so, my dear, why do you delay?

Maid. Won't your ladyship sit on this stone bench for a moment while I gather some flowers?

Padmāvati. Shall we sit here, dear lady?

Vāsavadattā. Let us do so.

[*Both sit down.*]

Maid. [*After gathering some flowers.*] Oh, look, princess, look! My hands are full of the *seoli* blossoms, with their half-way hose of *realgar*¹.

Padmāvati. [*Looking at the flowers.*] See, lady, how brilliant are the colours of these flowers!

Vāsavadattā. Yes, how beautiful they are.

Maid. Princess, shall I pick any more?

Padmāvati. No, no, my dear, no more.

Vāsavadattā. Why do you stop her, my dear?

Padmāvati. If my noble lord should come here and see this abundance of blossom, I should be so honoured.

Vāsavadattā. Why, my dear, are you so much in love with your husband?

Padmāvati. I don't know, lady, but when he is away from me I feel wretched.

Vāsavadattā. [*Aside.*] How difficult it is for me. Even she speaks in this strain.

Maid. How delicately the princess has told us that she loves her husband.

Padmāvati. I have just one doubt.

Vāsavadattā. And what is that?

Padmāvati. Was my noble lord as much to Vāsavadattā as he is to me?

Vāsavadattā. Nay, more.

Padmāvati. How do you know?

Vāsavadattā. [*Aside.*] Ah! Partiality to my noble lord has made me transgress the bounds of propriety. I know what I will say. [*Aloud.*] Had her love been less, she would not have forsaken her own people.

Padmāvati. Possibly not.

Maid. Princess, you might gently suggest to your husband, that you too would like to learn to play the lute.²

¹ The blossoms have orange stems, which are compared to puttees the colour of red arsenic.

² Udayana was a master player on the lute. When in captivity he gave lessons to the princess Vāsavadattā. See pp. 3, 4, 61.

Padmāvati. I did speak to him about it.

Vāsavadattā. And what did he say?

Padmāvati. He said nothing. He heaved a deep sigh, and became silent.

Vāsavadattā. What did that mean, do you think?

Padmāvati. I think the memory of the noble Vāsavadattā's virtues came over him, but out of courtesy he restrained his tears in my presence.

Vāsavadattā. [*Aside.*] How happy I should be if that were true!

[*Enter the King and the Jester.*]

Jester. Aha! how pretty the garden looks with a thin sprinkling of *bandhujīva* flowers, fallen while they were being gathered. This way, my lord.

King. Very well, my dear Vasantaka, here I come.

Once in Ujjain, when the unimpeded vision of Avantī's princess brought me to that condition that you know of, the God of Love let fly at me with all his five arrows. Of those I still bear the pain in my heart, and now I am wounded again. If Cupid has only five arrows, what is this sixth dart he has discharged at me? (1)

Jester. Where has Lady Padmāvati gone? Has she gone to the creeper-bower? Or perhaps to the stone seat called the 'Crest of the Hill', which is so strewn with *asana*¹ flowers that it looks as if it were covered with a tiger's skin. Or could she have entered the wood of the Seven-leaved Trees² with their powerful pungent scent? Or perhaps she has gone into the wooden pavilion with crowds of birds and beasts painted on the walls. [*Looking up.*] Oh, look, your Highness! Do you see this line of cranes advancing steadily along the clear autumn sky, as beautiful as the long white arms of the adored Baladeva?

King. Yes, comrade, I see it.

Now stretched in an even line, now wide apart; now soaring high, now sinking low, crooked in its twists and turns, as the group of Seven Rishis³. Bright as a serpent's belly just slipped from its slough, like a boundary line it cuts the sky in two. (2)

Maid. Look, princess, look at this flock of cranes advancing steadily in line, as delicately tinted as a garland of pink water-lilies. Oh! the King!

¹ *Asana* = *Terminalia tomentosa* M. W.

³ The constellation of the Great Bear.

² *Saptacchada* = *Alstonia scholaris* M. W.

Padmāvati. Ah! 'tis my noble lord. Lady, for your sake I shall avoid seeing my husband. So let us go into this bower of *mādhavi*¹ creepers.
Vāsavadattā. Very well.

[*They do so.*]

Jester. Lady Padmāvati came here and went away again.

King. How do you know that?

Jester. Just look at these *seoli* clusters from which the flowers have been picked.

King. Oh, Vasantaka! What a gorgeous flower it is!

Vāsavadattā. [*Aside.*] That name 'Vasantaka' makes me feel as if I were at Ujjain again.

King. Let us sit down, Vasantaka, on this stone seat and wait for Padmāvati.

Jester. Very well, sir. [*Sits down and gets up again.*] The heat of the scorching autumn sun is unbearable. So let us go into this bower of *mādhavi* creepers.

King. All right. Lead the way.

Jester. Very well. [*Both walk round.*]

Padmāvati. The worthy Vasantaka is bent on spoiling everything. What shall we do now?

Maid. Princess, shall I keep his Highness away by shaking this hanging creeper swarming with black bees?

Padmāvati. Yes, do.

[*Maid does so.*]

Jester. Help! help! Keep away, your Highness, keep away!

King. What is the matter?

Jester. I am being stung by these damnable bees.

King. No, no, do not do that. One should never frighten the bees. Look,

Drowsy with drafts of honey, the bees are humming softly in the close embraces of their love-sick queens. Should our footsteps startle them, like us, they will be parted from their darlings. (3)

So let us stay here.

Jester. Very well.

[*Both sit down.*]

Maid. Princess, we are in truth made prisoners.

Padmāvati. Happily it is my noble lord who sits there.

Vāsavadattā. [*Aside.*] I am glad to see my noble lord looking so well.

Maid. Princess, the lady's eyes are filled with tears.

¹ Gaertnera racemosa.

Vāsavadattā. The moringa pollen has got into my eyes because of the naughty bees, and made them water.

Padmāvati. Quite so.

Jester. Well, now, there is nobody in this pleasure-garden. There is something I want to ask. May I ask you a question?

King. Yes, if you like.

Jester. Which do you love best, the lady Vāsavadattā that was, or Padmāvati of to-day?

King. Now why do you put me in such a very difficult position?

Padmāvati. Oh, my dear; what a difficult position for my noble lord!

Vāsavadattā. [*Aside.*] And for me, too, unfortunate that I am.

Jester. Now you must speak frankly. One is dead, the other is nowhere near.

King. No, my dear fellow, no, I am not going to say anything. You are a chatterer.

Padmāvati. By so much he has said enough.

Jester. Oh, I swear truly, I won't tell a soul. My lips are sealed.¹

King. No, my friend, I dare not speak.

Padmāvati. How stupidly indiscreet he is. Even after that he cannot read his heart.

Jester. What, you won't tell me? If you don't, you shall not stir a single step from the stone seat. Your Highness is now my prisoner.

King. What, by force?

Jester. Yes, by force.

King. We shall see.

Jester. Forgive me, your Highness. I conjure you in the name of our friendship to tell me the truth.

King. No escape. Well listen,

Padmāvati I much admire for her beauty, charm, and virtue,
and yet she has not won my heart still bound to Vāsava-
dattā. (4)

¹ *Lit.* 'See, I bite my tongue.'

Vāsavadattā. [*Aside.*] So may it ever be. This is my reward for all my suffering. My living here unknown is beginning to be delightful.

Maid. Oh, princess, his Highness is very discourteous.

Padmāvati. My dear, don't say that. My noble lord is courteous indeed, for even now he remembers the virtues of the noble Vāsavadattā.

Vāsavadattā. My dear child, your words are worthy of your birth.

King. Well, I have spoken. Now you must tell me, which is your favourite : Vāsavadattā that was, or Padmāvati of to-day ?

Padmāvati. My noble lord is mimicking Vasantaka.

Jester. What is the use of my chatter ! I have the greatest admiration for both their ladyships.

King. Idiot. You made me tell, and now you are afraid to speak.

Jester. What, would you force me ?

King. Why, yes, of course.

Jester. Then you will never hear it.

King. Forgive me, mighty brahman, speak of your own free will.

Jester. Now you shall hear. Lady Vāsavadattā I greatly admired.

Lady Padmāvati is young, beautiful, gentle, free from pride, gently spoken, and very courteous. But there is one other great virtue. Vāsavadattā used to come to me with delicious dishes, saying, 'Where has the good Vasantaka got to ?'

Vāsavadattā [*Aside.*] Bravo, Vasantaka. You must remember this.

King. Very well, Vasantaka. I shall tell all this to Queen Vāsavadattā.

Jester. Alas, Vāsavadattā ! Where is Vāsavadattā ? She is dead long ago.

King. [*Sadly.*] It is true, Vāsavadattā is no more.

By your raillery you confused my mind, and by force of former usage those words slipped out. (5)

Padmāvati. This was a delightful conversation, but now the wretch has spoiled it all.

Vāsavadattā. [*Aside.*] Well, well, I am consoled. How sweet it is to hear these words without being seen.

Jester. Be of good cheer, your Highness. Fate cannot be gainsaid. It is so, and that's all about it.

King. My dear fellow, you do not understand my condition. For,
A deeply-rooted passion it is hard to abandon, by constant recollection the pain is renewed. This is the way of the world that the mind must cancel its debt with tears to gain tranquillity. (6)

Jester. His Highness's face is wet with tears. I will get some water to wash it.

Padmāvati. Madam, my lord's face is hidden in a veil of tears. Let us slip away.

Vāsavadattā. Yes, let us go. Nay, you stay here. It is not right for you to go and leave your husband unhappy. I will go alone.

Maid. The lady is right. You should go to him, Princess.

Padmāvati. What do you say? Shall I go?

Vāsavadattā. Yes, dear, do. [*Exit.*]

[*Enter the Jester.*]

Jester. [*With water in a lotus leaf.*] Why, here is Lady Padmāvati.

Padmāvati. What is it, my good Vasantaka?

Jester. This is that, that is this.

Padmāvati. Speak out, sir, speak.

Jester. Lady, the pollen of the moringa flowers, carried by the wind, has got into his Highness's eyes, and his face is wet with tears. Please take him this water to wash his face.

Padmāvati. [*Aside.*] Oho! like master, like man, how courteous he is. [*Approaching the king.*] Greeting, my lord. Here is some water for your face.

King. Eh, what, Padmāvati? [*Aside to Jester.*] What's this, Vasantaka?

Jester. It's like this. [*Whispers in his ear.*]

King. Bravo, Vasantaka, bravo. [*Sipping water.*] Padmāvati, pray be seated.

Padmāvati. As my lord commands. [*Sits down.*]

King. Padmāvati,

The motes of the moringa blossoms, agitated by the breeze, fair lady, have bathed my face in tears. (7)

[*Aside.*]

She's but a girl and newly wed, should she learn the truth it would distress her. Courage she has, it is true, but women are by nature easily alarmed. (8)

Jester. This afternoon his Majesty the King of Magadha will, as usual, receive his friends, giving yourself the place of honour. Courtesy reciprocating courtesy engenders affection. So it is time for your Highness to make a move.

King. Yes, indeed. It is a good suggestion. [*Rises.*]

Men of eminent virtues are easily found in this world, as those whose hospitable treatment is unfailing, but it is difficult to find men who duly appreciate these qualities. (9)

[*Exeunt omnes.*]

END OF THE FOURTH ACT.

ACT V

[*At Magadha.*]

INTERLUDE

[*Enter Padminikā.*]

Padminikā. Madhukarikā, oh, Madhukarikā, come here quick.

[*Enter Madhukarikā.*]

Madhukarikā. Here I am, my dear, what do you want me to do?

Padminikā. Don't you know, my dear, that Princess Padmāvatī is ill with a bad headache?

Madhukarikā. Alas!

Padminikā. Run quick, my dear, and call Madam Avantikā. Only tell her the princess has a headache, and she will come of her own accord.

Madhukarikā. But, my dear, what good can she do?

Padminikā. Why, she will tell the princess pleasant stories and drive away the pain.

Madhukarikā. Very likely. Where have you made up the princess's bed?

Padminikā. It is spread in the sea-room.¹

¹ *Samudra-grha*. Perhaps a room built out into a lake, or a room with jets of water.

Now you go. I shall look for the good Vasantaka, to inform his Highness.

Madhukarikā. Very well. [*Exit.*]

Padminikā. Now I will look for the good Vasantaka.

[*Enter the Jester.*]

Jester. The heart of the illustrious king of the Vatsas was depressed by separation from his queen, but now on this auspicious and extremely joyful occasion, fanned as it were by this marriage with Padmāvati, it burns the more fiercely with the flame of the fire of love. [*Observing Padminikā.*] Hallo! here's Padminikā. Well, Padminikā, what's the news?

Padminikā. My good Vasantaka, don't you know that Princess Padmāvati has a bad headache?

Jester. Truly, lady, I did not know.

Padminikā. Well, let his Highness know about it. Meanwhile, I will hurry up with the ointment for her forehead.

Jester. Where has Padmāvati's bed been made up?

Padminikā. It is spread in the 'sea-room'.

Jester. Well, you had better be off. I will tell his Highness.

[*Exeunt ambo.*]

END OF THE INTERLUDE

[*Enter the King.*]

King. Once again, with the lapse of time, I have taken up the burden of wedlock, but my thoughts fly back to Avantī's daughter, worthy daughter of a worthy sire; to her, whose slender frame was consumed by the fire at Lāvāṇaka, like a lotus-plant blasted by the frost. (1)

[*Enter the Jester.*]

Jester. Quick, your Highness, quick,

King. What is the matter?

Jester. Lady Padmāvati has a bad headache.

King. Who told you?

Jester. Padminikā told me.

King. Alas!

Now that I have won another bride, endowed with grace and beauty, and possessed of all the virtues, my grief is somewhat dulled, yet after my experience of woe, still sick with the former pain, I anticipate the like for Padmāvati. (2)

Where is Padmāvati?

Jester. They put her bed in the sea-room.

King. Then show me the way.

Jester. Come this way, your Highness. [*Both walk round.*] This is the sea-room. Be pleased to enter.

King. You go in first.

Jester. Very well, sir. [*Enters.*] Help, help. Back, your Highness, stand back.

King. What is the matter?

Jester. Here's a snake wriggling on the floor. Its body is visible in the light of the lamp.

King. [*Entering, has a look round, and smiles.*]

Ha! the idiot thinks he sees a snake,

For the dangling garland dropped from the portal arch, and
lying stretched along the ground, thou dost suppose, poor
fool, to be a serpent. Turned over by the light evening breeze
it does move somewhat like a snake. (3)

Jester. [*Looking closely.*] Your Highness is right. It is not a snake.
[*Entering and looking round.*] Lady Padmāvati must have been here
and gone away.

King. She cannot have come, comrade.

Jester. How do you know that?

King. What need of knowing? Look,

The bed has not been pressed, it is as smooth as when made.
There is no crinkle in the counterpane, the pillow is not
rumpled nor stained with medicines for an aching head. There
is no decoration to divert a patient's gaze. Those who are
brought to bed by illness are not likely to leave it so soon. (4)

Jester. Then you might sit down on the bed for a while and wait for her ladyship.

King. Very well. [*Sits down.*] I feel dreadfully sleepy, old fellow. Tell me a story.

Jester. I will tell you a story, but your Highness must say 'Oh!' or something to show you are listening.

King. Very well.

Jester. There is a town called Ujjain. There there are most delightful swimming baths.

King. What, Ujjain did you say?

Jester. If you do not like this story, I will tell you another.

King. Comrade, it is not that I do not like it. But

I remember the daughter of Avanti's king. At the moment of
leaving she thought of her kinsfolk, and through affection

a tear welled up, which, after clinging to the corner of her eye,
fell on my breast (5)

Moreover,

Time and again during her lessons she would fix her gaze on
me and, dropping the quill, her hand would go on playing in
the air. (6)

Jester. All right. I will tell you another.

There is a town called Brahmadata, where there was a king named
Kāmpilya.

King. What's that? What did you say?

[*Jester repeats what he has just said.*]

King. Idiot! You should say King Brahmadata and Kāmpilya
City.

Jester. Is Brahmadata the king and Kāmpilya the city?

King. Yes, that's right.

Jester. Well, then, just wait a moment, while I get it pat. 'King
Brahmadata, Kāmpilya City.' [*Repeats this several times.*]

Now listen.

Why, his Highness is fast asleep. It is very chilly at this hour. I will
go and fetch my cloak.¹ [*Exit.*]

[*Enter Vāsavadattā in Avantī dress and a Maid.*]

Maid. Come this way, lady. The princess is suffering from a severe
headache.

Vāsavadattā. I am so sorry. Where has her bed been made up?

Maid. It is spread in the sea-room.

Vāsavadattā. Well, do you lead the way.

[*Both walk round.*]

Maid. This is the sea-room. Go in, madam, I will hurry up the
ointments for her forehead. [*Exit.*]

Vāsavadattā. Oh, how cruel are the gods to me.

Padmāvatī, who was a source of comfort to my lord in the agony of
his bereavement, has now fallen ill herself. I will go in. [*Entering
and looking round.*] Ah! how careless the servants are. Padmāvatī
is ill and they have left her alone with only a lamp to keep her company.
So, she is asleep. I shall sit down. But if I sit elsewhere it might look
as if I had but little love for her. So I shall sit on this same bed. [*Sits
down.*] Why is it that now I am sitting beside her, my heart seems to
thrill with joy? Happily her breathing is easy and regular. Her head-
ache must have gone. And by leaving me one side of the bed she seems

¹ Or, 'blanket'?

to invite me to clasp her in my arms. I will lie by her side. [*Proceeds to lie down.*]

King. [*Talking in his sleep.*] O Vāsavadattā.

Vāsavadattā. [*Starting up.*] Ah! It is my lord and not Padmāvatī. Has he seen me? If so, the elaborate scheme of the noble Yaugandharāyaṇa will come to naught.

King. O daughter of Avantī's king.

Vāsavadattā. Happily my lord is only dreaming. There is no one about. I shall stay a little while and gladden my eyes and my heart.

King. Dear one, my darling pupil, answer me.

Vāsavadattā. I am speaking, my lord, I am speaking.

King. Are you displeased?

Vāsavadattā. Oh no! Oh no! Only very miserable.

King. If you are not displeased, why do you wear no jewels?

Vāsavadattā. What could be better than this?

King. Are you thinking of Viracikā?

Vāsavadattā. [*Angrily.*] O fie. Even here Viracikā!

King. Then I entreat forgiveness for Viracikā.

[*Stretches out his hands.*]

Vāsavadattā. I have stayed too long. Some one might see me. I will go. But first I will put back on the bed that hand of his hanging down. [*She does so and exit.*]

King. [*Rising suddenly.*] Stay! Vāsavadattā, stay! Alas!

Rushing out in my confusion, I struck against a panel of the door, and now I have no clear idea whether or no this was really my heart's desire. (7)

[*Enter the Jester.*]

Jester. Ah! Your Highness is awake.

King. Delightful news! Vāsavadattā is alive.

Jester. Oh, help us! What's this about Vāsavadattā? Why she died long ago.

King. Say not so, my friend,

As I lay sleeping on this couch she wakened me and disappeared. Rumaṇvān deceived me when he said she perished in the fire. (8)

Jester. Goodness gracious! but it's impossible, isn't it? I was talking about the swimming baths and you have been thinking of her ladyship, and you must have seen her in a dream.

King. So then it was only a dream.

If that was a dream, how glorious never to wake again, if this be illusion, long may that illusion last. (9)

Jester. There is a sylph dwelling in this city named Avantisundarī. That's what you must have seen, my dear fellow.

King. No, no.

At the end of my dream I awoke and saw her face; the eyes strangers to collyrium and the long unbraided locks were those of a lady guarding her virtue. (10)

Beside, see, comrade, see

This arm of mine was closely clasped by the agitated queen.

Even now it has not ceased to thrill with joy though it felt her touch only in a dream. (11)

Jester. Come, now, no futile fancies. Come along, let us go to the ladies' court.

[*Enter the Chamberlain.*]

Chamberlain. Greeting to my noble lord.

King Darśaka, our sovereign lord, sends you these tidings: Rumanvān, the minister of your Highness, has arrived in the vicinity with a large force to attack Āruṇi. Likewise my own victorious army, elephants, cavalry, chariots, and infantry, is equipped and ready. Arise, therefore. Moreover,

Your foes are divided. Your subjects, devoted to you by reason of your virtues, have gained confidence. Arrangements are completed to protect your rear when you advance. Whatever is needed to crush the foe, I have provided. Forces have crossed the Ganges, the Vatsa kingdom is in the hollow of your hand. (12)

King. [*Rising.*] Very good. Now

I shall see that Aruṇi, adept in dreadful deeds and in the battlefield, surging like a mighty ocean with huge elephants and horses, with a lashing spray of arrows on the wing,—I will destroy him. (13)

END OF THE FIFTH ACT.

ACT VI

INTERLUDE

[*The Palace at Kauśāmbī.*]

[*Enter a Chamberlain.*]

Chamberlain. What ho, there! Who is on duty at the door of the golden arch?

[*Enter Portress.*]

Portress. Sir, it is I, Vijayā. What do you want me to do?

Chamberlain. Good woman, to take a message to Udayana, whose glory has increased by the capture of the Vatsa kingdom. Tell him that a chamberlain of the Raibhya clan has come here from the court of Mahāsenā. Also Vāsavadattā's nurse, named Vasundharā, sent by Queen Angāravatī. They are both waiting at the gate.

Portress. Sir, this is not the place or time for a porter's message.

Chamberlain. Not the place or time—how's that?

Portress. Listen, sir. To-day some one in the sun-faced¹ palace was playing on the lute. When my lord heard it he said, 'I seem to hear the notes of Ghoshavatī'².

Chamberlain. And then?

Portress. Then somebody went and asked where he got that lute. He said he had found it lying in a thicket of reeds on the banks of the Narmadā. If it was any use, they could take it to the king. So they brought it, and my lord pressed it to his side and went off in a swoon. When he came to himself, with the tears running down his face, he said, 'Thou art found, Ghoshavatī, but her we cannot see'.

That, sir, is why the occasion is unsuitable.

How can I take your message?

Chamberlain. My good woman, you must really let him know, for this as it were hangs on to that.

Portress. I will let him know, sir. Why, here is my lord coming down from the sun-faced palace. I shall tell him here.

Chamberlain. Yes, do, good woman.

[*Exeunt.*]

END OF INTERLUDE.

[*Enter the King and the Jester.*]

King. Oh, my lute, whose notes are so sweet to the ear, after reposing in the lap of the queen and resting against her twin bosoms, how camest thou to dwell in that dreadful abode in the wilds, where flocks of birds have fouled thy strings?³ (1)

How heartless art thou, Ghoshavatī, with no memory of thy unhappy mistress:

¹ Perhaps the palace or wing facing the sun.

² 'Sonorous', the name of his lute.

³ Properly the 'neck' which was covered with the droppings of flocks of birds.

How she pressed thee to her side as she bore thee on her hip;
 how when weary she tucked thee softly between her breasts;
 how she bewailed the loss of me when we were parted; how
 she smiled and chatted in the intervals of playing. (2)

Jester. Enough now, don't torment yourself beyond measure.

King. Say not so, dear friend.

My passion, for a long time dormant, has been awakened by
 the lute, but the queen, who loved this lute, I cannot see. (3)

Vasantaka, have Ghoshavati refitted with new strings by some skilful
 artist and bring it back to me at once.

Jester. As Your Highness commands.

[*Exit, taking the lute.*]

[*Enter Portress.*]

Portress. Greeting, my lord. There has arrived here from the court
 of Mahāsena a chamberlain of the Raibhya clan and also Vāsavadattā's
 nurse, Dame Vasundharā, sent by the Queen Aṅgāravati.

They are waiting at the entrance.

King. Then go and call Padmāvati.

Portress. As my lord commands.

King. Can Mahāsena have learned this news so soon?

[*Enter Padmāvati and the Portress.*]

Portress. This way, princess.

Padmāvati. Greeting, my noble lord.

King. Padmāvati, did they tell you? A chamberlain named Raibhya
 has come from Mahāsena with Dame Vasundharā, Vāsavadattā's nurse,
 from Queen Aṅgāravati, and they are waiting outside.

Padmāvati. My noble lord, I shall be glad to have good news of my
 relative's family.

King. It is worthy of you to speak of Vāsavadattā's relatives as your
 own. Padmāvati, be seated. Now why do you not sit down?

Padmāvati. My noble lord, would you have me seated at your side
 when you receive these people?

King. What harm is there in that?

Padmāvati. That your lordship has married again may seem like
 indifference.

King. To hide my wife from the view of people who should see her
 would create a great scandal. So please be seated.

Padmāvati. As my noble lord commands.

[*Sits down.*] My lord, I am rather uneasy as to what the dear parents
 will say.

King. Quite so, Padmāvati.

My heart is full of misgivings as to what he will say. I stole away his daughter, and I have not kept her safe. Through fickle fortune I have greatly injured my fair name and I am afraid, like a son who has roused his father's wrath. (4)

Padmāvatī. Nothing can be preserved when its time has come.

Portress. The chamberlain and the nurse are waiting at the door.

King. Bring them in at once.

Portress. As my lord commands. [*Exit.*]

[*Enter the Chamberlain, the Nurse, and the Portress.*]

Chamberlain. To visit this kingdom, allied to ours by marriage ties, is a great joy, but when I remember the death of our princess I am filled with sorrow. O Destiny, was it not enough for thee that the kingdom should be seized by foes if the welfare of the queen remained? (5)

Portress. Here is my lord. Approach him, sir.

Chamberlain. [*Approaching the king.*] Greeting to your Highness.

Nurse. Greeting, your Highness.

King. [*Respectfully.*] Sir,

That king who regulates the rise and fall of royal dynasties on this earth, that king with whom I craved alliance, tell me, is he well? (6)

Chamberlain. Why, yes. Mahāsena is very well, and he would be informed of the health of everybody here.

King. [*Rising from his seat.*] What are the commands of Mahāsena.

Chamberlain. This is worthy of Vaidehī's son. Now pray be seated and listen to Mahāsena's message.

King. As Mahāsena commands. [*Sits down.*]

Chamberlain. 'Congratulations on the recovery of your kingdom seized by enemies, for,

There is no energy in those that are weak and faint-hearted—while the glory of kingship is enjoyed as a rule only by those that have energy.' (7)

King. Sir, it is all due to the might of Mahāsena.

For,

Aforetime when he had vanquished me he cherished me with his own sons. His daughter I stole away by force, but have not kept her safe. Now, learning of her decease, he shows me the same affection, for the king is the cause of my regaining the land of the Vatsas, my lawful subjects. (8)

Chamberlain. That is the message of Mahāsena.

The queen's message will be delivered by this lady.

King. Ah! tell me, nurse.

The holy goddess of the city, chief among the sixteen queens, my mother—so afflicted with grief at my departure—is she in good health? (9)

Nurse. The queen is well, and sends inquiries for the health of your lordship and all that are yours.

King. The health of all that are mine? Ah, nurse, what sort of health is that?

Nurse. Nay, now, my lord, do not torment yourself beyond measure.

Chamberlain. Compose yourself, my noble lord.

Though Mahāsena's daughter has passed away, she has not ceased to exist, while she is so mourned by her noble lord. But verily whom can any one protect in the hour of death? When the rope breaks, who can hold the pitcher? It is the same law for men and trees: now they grow, and anon they are cut down. (10)

King. Nay, sir, say not so.

Mahāsena's daughter was my pupil and my beloved queen.

How could I forget her, even in births to come? (11)

Nurse. Thus saith the queen: 'Vāsavadattā has passed away. To me and to Mahāsena you are as dear as our Gopāla and Pālaka, for from the very first we intended you to be our son-in-law. That is why you were brought to Ujjain. Under the pretext of learning the lute we gave her to you, with no ritual fire as witness. In your impetuosity you carried her off without the celebration of the auspicious nuptial rites. So then we had portraits painted of you and of Vāsavadattā on a panel, and therewith celebrated the marriage. We send you the portraits,¹ and hope the sight of them will give you satisfaction.

King. Ah, how loving and how noble is the message of her Majesty!

Those words I hold more precious than the conquest of a hundred realms. For I am not forgotten in her love, in spite of all my transgressions. (12)

Padmāvatī. My lord, I would like to see the portrait of my eldest sister and salute her.

Nurse. Look, princess, look. [*Shows her the picture.*]

Padmāvatī. [*Aside.*] Why! It is very much like the Lady Avantikā.

[*Aloud.*] My lord, is this a good likeness of her ladyship?

King. Likeness? No, I think it is herself. Oh, alas!

¹ The text gives but one picture-board separate pictures would be more convenient for the two portraits. For the mock marriage and the action of this scene two

How could cruel calamity befall this charming loveliness?

How could fire ravage the sweetness of this face? (13)

Padmāvati. By looking at my lord's portrait I can tell whether her ladyship's is a good likeness or not.

Nurse. See here, princess.

Padmāvati. [*Looking.*] My lord's portrait is so good, I am sure her ladyship's must be a good likeness too.

King. My queen, ever since you looked at the picture I see you are delighted but perplexed. Why is that?

Padmāvati. My noble lord, there is a lady living here who is exactly like this portrait.

King. What, of Vāsavadattā?

Padmāvati. Yes.

King. Then send for her at once.

Padmāvati. My noble lord, a certain brahman left her with me as a ward, before my marriage, saying that she was his sister. Her husband is away, and she shuns the sight of other men. So when you see her in my company you will know who it is.

King. If she be a brahman's sister, it is manifest she must be another. Identity of form occurs in life as of very doubles. (14)

[*Enter Portress.*]

Portress. Greeting to my noble lord.

Here is a brahman from Ujjain who says he placed his sister as a ward in the hands of the princess. He wants to take her back, and he is waiting at the door.

King. Padmāvati, is this the brahman you spoke of?

Padmāvati. It must be.

King. Let the brahman be introduced at once with the formalities proper to the inner court.

Portress. As my lord commands. [*Exit.*]

King. Padmāvati, do you bring the lady.

Padmāvati. As my noble lord commands. [*Exit.*]

[*Enter Yaugandharāyaṇa and the Portress.*]

Yaugandharāyaṇa. Ah! [*Aside.*]

Though it was in the king's interest that I concealed the Queen Consort, though I can see that what I've done is to his benefit, yet even when my work is done my heart misgives me as to what my royal master will say. (15)

Portress. Here is my lord. Approach him, sir.

Yaugandharāyaṇa. Greeting to your Highness, greeting!

King. I seem to have heard that voice before.

Sir Brahman, did you leave your sister as a ward in the hands of Padmāvati?

Yaugandharāyaṇa. Certainly I did.

King. Then let his sister come here at once without delay.

Portress. As my lord commands. [*Exit.*]

[*Enter Padmāvati, Avantikā, and Portress.*]

Padmāvati. Come, lady. I have pleasant news for you.

Avantikā. What is it?

Padmāvati. Your brother has come.

Avantikā. Happily he still remembers me.

Padmāvati. [*Approaching.*] Greeting, my noble lord. Here is my ward.

King. Make a formal restitution, Padmāvati. A deposit should be returned in the presence of witnesses. The worthy Raibhya here and this good lady will act as recorders.

Padmāvati. Now, sir, resume your charge of this lady.

Nurse. [*Looking closely at Avantikā.*] Oh, but this is the princess Vāsavadattā.

King. What, Mahāsena's daughter? Oh, my queen, go into the ladies' court with Padmāvati.

Yaugandharāyaṇa. No, no, she must not go in there. This lady, I tell you, is my sister.

King. What are you saying? This is the daughter of Mahāsena.

Yaugandharāyaṇa. O king,

Born in the Bharata clan, you are self-controlled, enlightened,
and pure. To take her by force were unworthy of you, a
model of kingly duty. (16)

King. Very well, but let us just see this similarity of form. Draw the curtain aside.¹

Yaugandharāyaṇa. Greeting to my royal master.

Vāsavadattā. Greeting to my noble lord.

King. Heavens! This is Yaugandharāyaṇa, and this Mahāsena's daughter.

This time is it true, or do I see the vision again? I saw her
before just like this, but was deceived. (17)

Yaugandharāyaṇa. Sire, by concealing the queen I am guilty of a grave offence. Please, pardon me, my royal master.

[*Falls at his feet.*]

¹ Perhaps idiomatic—'unveil'. It is difficult to see how the minister and Vāsavadattā could be behind a curtain. A

transverse curtain would not help us. See Keith, *Sanskrit Drama*, p. 113.

King. [*Raising him.*] You are certainly Yaugandharāyaṇa.

By feigning madness, by battles and by plans worked out according to the codes of polity—you, by your exertions, raised me up when I was sinking. (18)

Yaugandharāyaṇa. I do but follow the fortunes of my royal master.

Padmāvatī. So then this is her Majesty the Queen. Lady, in treating you as a companion, I have unwillingly transgressed the bounds of propriety. I bow my head and beg your forgiveness.

Vāsavadattā. Rise, rise, happy lady of a living lord, rise, I say. If anything offends it is your suppliant form.¹

Padmāvatī. I thank you!

King. Tell me, my dear Yaugandharāyaṇa, what was your object in concealing the queen?

Yaugandharāyaṇa. My one idea was to save Kauśāmbī.

King. What was your reason for putting her in the hands of Padmāvatī as a ward?

Yaugandharāyaṇa. The soothsayers, Pushpaka and Bhadraka, had predicted that she was destined to become your queen.

King. Did Rumaṇvān know of this?

Yaugandharāyaṇa. Sire, they all knew.

King. Oho! what a rogue he is—Rumaṇvān!

Yaugandharāyaṇa. Sire, let the worthy Raibhya and this good lady return this very day to announce the news of the safety of the queen.

King. No, no. We will all go together, taking Queen Padmāvatī.

Yaugandharāyaṇa. As your Majesty commands.

EPILOGUE.

This earth, that extends to the ocean, with the Himālaya and Vindhya mountains as ear-drops—may our Lion King rule over her, marked with the symbol of a single sovereign sway. (19)

¹ Reading doubtful.

CĀRUDATTA IN POVERTY

(*Daridra-Cārudattam*)

INTRODUCTION

THERE lived in Ujjain an opulent young merchant named Cārudatta. He was so charitable, so liberal in offerings to the gods and in gifts to his friends, that all his wealth was dissipated. Then it happened that he became enamoured of a beautiful young courtesan of the refined, affectionate type familiar in the literature of the East from Greece to Japan. Vasantasenā, the courtesan, had fallen in love with the young merchant.

The play opens with a prologue in which the stage-manager speaks Prakrit and goes out to invite a poor brahman to share a meal. This introduces Maitreya, the Jester boon-companion of the hero Cārudatta. From him, and from his dialogue with Cārudatta, we hear much of the woes of poverty.

Outside the house the Courtesan is chased by the villain, that is by the King's brother-in-law, and an attendant Parasite. She gives them the slip in the dark. The Hero sends out the Jester and a maid for some religious observance. The Courtesan enters the Hero's house and is mistaken for the maid. Having shaken off the libertines in the street, the Jester returns. The Courtesan is discovered, and, claiming protection, leaves her jewels in the Hero's care. She is escorted home by the Jester. (ACT I.)

The Courtesan discusses her beloved with her maid and then with the Shampooer, who rushes in to escape a creditor. He has been in Cārudatta's service, so Vasantasenā befriends him. A page rushes in with a story of a rogue elephant and of Cārudatta's kindness. They catch a glimpse of Cārudatta from the parapet. (ACT II.)

The Hero and the Jester have been to a concert and are returning late. The Courtesan's jewels are made over to the Jester. He and his master sleep. Sajjalaka, an expert burglar, cuts an artistic hole in the wall and goes off with the jewels, which the sleepy Jester thought he was handing over to Cārudatta. When the theft is discovered, his wife sacrifices her pearl necklace, worth a lakh, to compensate the owner. (ACT III.)

It appears that Sajjalaka, the enterprising burglar, is in love with Vasantasenā's maid, Madanikā, and needed money to buy the young

woman out. He comes to the Courtesan's house and confesses his crime to the Maid. She recognizes the jewellery and tells him to give it to her mistress in the merchant's name. In the meantime the Jester arrives with the pearl necklace. After he has gone, Sajjalaka brings in the Courtesan's own jewellery, pretending to bring it from Cārudatta.

Vasantasenā loads her maid with jewellery and packs her off to marry her burglar. The Courtesan is preparing to visit Cārudatta, in spite of a threatening storm, in order to return the necklace, when the play suddenly ends. (ACT IV.)

What we have here is obviously a fragment, not a complete play in itself. *The Little Clay Cart* completes the story up to the reprieve of Cārudatta, who has been condemned to death for the murder of Vasantasenā. The later play has more literary polish, including an elaborate description in Prakrit of Vasantasenā's palace, but the dramatic force seems to come from the earlier play. How much in the later scenes of *The Little Clay Cart* is due to the second hand (said to be King Śūdraka) we can hardly guess. The way in which *The Little Clay Cart* is based on an older play is a warning of how we may be deceived by what appears to be uniform original work.

DRAMATIS PERSONAE

(In order of appearance.)

Stage-manager }
Actress } in Prologue.

JESTER, Maitreya, friend of Cārudatta.

HERO, Cārudatta, the impoverished merchant of Ujjain.

Śakāra, the king's brother-in-law, a libertine pursuing Vasantasenā, the villain of the play. (Samsthāna.)

Parasite, attendant on Śakāra.

Radanikā, maidservant in Cārudatta's house.

COURTESAN, Vasantasenā, in love with Cārudatta.

Maid, Madanikā, in Vasantasenā's house.

Shampooer, formerly in Cārudatta's service.

Page in Vasantasenā's household. (Karnapūra.)

Vardhamānavaka, servant in Cārudatta's house.

Sajjalaka, burglar who marries Madanikā.

Brahman lady, wife of Cārudatta.

Second maid, in Vasantasenā's house, Vicchittikā.

Third maid, in Vasantasenā's house, Caturikā.

PROLOGUE

At the end of the opening¹ enter the Stage-manager.

Stage-manager. I left my house so early in the morning that my eyes are rolling with hunger like two water drops on a lotus leaf. [*Turning round.*] I will just go home and see whether or no there is a meal ready. [*Turning about.*] Here is my house. I will go in. [*Enters and looks round.*] The ground has been blackened by turning round iron pots. There is a scent like the savoury smell of grease, and as a good omen the attendants are running to and fro. Is there then a meal ready? Or does hunger make me think the whole world is made of rice? Well, I will call my wife. Madam, will you come here a moment?

Actress. Here I am, sir. It is a good thing that you have come.

Manager. My dear, is there any breakfast in the house?

Actress. There is.

Manager. Long life to you, and may you ever be the giver of good food!

Actress. Why, sir, I have been waiting for you.

Manager. Ah, my dear, is there what I want?

Actress. There is.

Manager. So may the gods bless you. What is there, my dear?

Actress. There is melted butter, sugar, curds, and rice.

Manager. All this in our house?

Actress. No, no, in the market.

Manager. Oh, you wicked woman, so may your own hopes be cut off, and you shall come to naught. I am like a wisp of grass² tossed up by a fierce wind so high from the hill top and then let fall again.

Actress. Don't be alarmed. Just wait a little while. Everything will be ready. I have got it, never fear. You must assist me, sir, in my fast to-day.

Manager. What is this fast of yours, ma'am?

Actress. It's the fast to get a handsome husband.

Manager. In your next life, I presume?

Actress. Quite so.

Manager. That's all right then. But who gave you the idea of this fast?

Actress. This servant of ours, Cūrṇagoṣṭha.

Manager. Well done, Cūrṇagoṣṭha, well done.

¹ Nāndī, see note p. ix.

² Varāṇḍī.

Actress. If you approve, sir, I should like to invite some brahman worthy of our company.

Manager. A most pious suggestion. In that way I shall get a good breakfast. Very well, do you go in, ma'am, and I will find a brahman worthy of our company.

Actress. As you bid, sir. [*Exit.*]

Manager. Now where can I get a poor brahman? [*Looking around.*] Ah! here comes the noble Maitreya, Cārudatta's friend. I will invite him. [*Stepping round.*] Sir, I invite you to take a meal at my house. Do not despise me and my invitation because I am poor. There will be everything good to eat. There's melted butter, sugar, curds, rice, everything. Moreover, there will be a fee, in gold pieces.

[*Voice behind the Scene.*]

'You must invite somebody else. I am not free.'

Manager. Deign to enjoy, good sir, this exquisite rice offered with great respect. Well prepared with butter and sugar and curds, it is flavoured with scented curry and spice. (1)

END OF PROLOGUE.

ACT I

[*Outside Cārudatta's house and later inside.*]

[*Enter the Jester.*]

Jester. You must invite somebody else. I am not free. I am not free, I tell you. What do you say? There will be an ample meal? Yes, I know. But one doesn't eat the stone of the very sweetest mango, because it doesn't suit one. Now why do you keep on trying to coax me? I tell you I am engaged. What do you say—'there will be a fee, in gold coins'? I decline it—in words, but cling to it in my mind. Alas! oh, misery! I, too, am looking for the invitations of others. I used to pass my days in Cārudatta's house chewing the cud of savoury sweetmeats, like a bull at the cross-ways stuffed up to the gullet. I used to sit like a painter amid his numerous pans of paint, surrounded by countless dishes of various kinds, ready throughout the twenty-four hours, seasoned with asafoetida, and in between whiles there were drinks, fragrant for gargling, produced at the lift of an eyebrow. And now that same I, because the noble Cārudatta is poor, must live like the pigeons, running elsewhere for my food before I come to his house.

And there's another wonderful thing. My belly understands the change

in affairs. It is satisfied with quite a little. It will take a good weight of rice if it is offered. What is not offered it does not demand or expect. Of course it is not I that am not content with such a state of affairs.

The noble Cārudatta is at his devotions,¹ so I have got him a garland and a garment of air. Now let me attend at his side. [*Stepping and looking around.*] Here is the noble Cārudatta, beautiful but pitiful like the moon at dawn. He is coming this way worshipping the household deities according to his means. I will go up to him. [*Exit.*]

[*Enter the Hero offering oblations, the Jester, and a Maid-servant with wood-sorrel² in her hands.*]

Hero. [*Sighing deeply.*] Oh! poverty is a living death to a high-minded man. For,

On this threshold of my house, where swans and flocks of cranes enjoyed the flower of libations, there sprouts the corn of old libations, and my handful of seed falls mumbled by the mouths of worms. (2)

Jester. Do not torment yourself too much. The young days of a house are like those of a man, subject to vicissitudes of circumstance. The ruin of your wealth, by charity from sea to sea, lends a charm to your present poverty like that of the moon losing all its light in the dark fortnight.

Hero. Nay, I do not grieve for a fortune lost. But the ruin of a man with a sense of virtue and of sentiment seems to me very pitiful. For,

Prosperity after a season of woe is glorious like the sight of a lamp to one lost in the dark, but he who comes to poverty after prosperity lives in his body but is as good as dead. (3)

Jester. Ah, comrade. Where has it all gone, such heaps and heaps of wealth, the choicest from mart and sea?

Hero. [*Sighing.*] Gone, my friend, the same way as my luck. Look you,

My money has been used up on the needs of my friends. I remember none that was refused. This spirit has paid the price of confidence, but cannot perish. (4)

[*Shows his grief.*]

Jester. Are you grieving for wealth and prosperity?

Hero. In truth my trouble does not come from the loss of riches, for they can come again with a turn of fortune. This it is tor-

¹ *Saṭṭhikida-devakayyassa*, 'one who has performed the religious duties (pertaining to the sixth'. Suktankar, *Studies in Bhāṣa*,

vi. J. B. B. R. A. S. I., p. 110. Mṛceḥ has *siddhī-kida (deva-kajjassa)*.

² *Cāṅgerikā*.

ments me, now that I have lost my wealth, my friends become indifferent to a man that's merely good. (5)

Again,

If a man be poor his kinsmen reckon nothing of his words. His magnanimity becomes ridiculous. The beauty of a moon of virtue is dimmed. Without enmity friends are estranged. Calamities abound. The evil deeds that others do are put upon his head. (6)

Jester. These damnable business affairs are running away from the house like herd boys scared by gnats. You are troubled now by the loss of your wealth. But it will sprout up again like the shoots of an old clump of reeds in the spring. So do not be so depressed.

Hero. Why should I be depressed, comrade? Am I poor, whose wife will follow my fortunes, whose good friend, thou, wilt share my joys and woes? And what is lacking with the indigent, I have not lost my magnanimity. (7)

[*Enter a Courtesan in flurry pursued by the Parasite and Śakāra.*]

Śakāra. Stop, Vasantasenā, stop I say.

Why are you going away, running away, racing away as you stumble? Oh, please now, I won't slay you. Do stop. My body, indeed, is scorched with love like a bit of leather fallen on red-hot coals. (8)

Parasite. Vasantasenā,

Why dost thou flee in terror like a gazelle frightened by a tiger's pursuit? Why transform thy delicate grace to hustle thy feet so skilled in teaching the dance?

Why should thine eyes dart sidelong glances tremulous with fright? (9)

Śakāra. Ah, doctor, this Vasantasenā's off.

Closely chased by us two lads like a jackal by a couple of hounds, with the merry jingling of her anklets and girdle, she's stolen my heart with the pericardium. (10)

Parasite. Vasantasenā,

Taking step after step by the hundred, why dost thou glide away like a female snake overwhelmed with the fear of the lord of birds? When I run at full speed I am like unto the wind. Dost thou think then I cannot catch thee? (11)

Courtesan. Pallavaka! Pallavaka! Parabhṛitikā! Parabhṛitikā! Madhukaraka! Śārikā! Alas. I have lost all my servants, so I must just take care of myself by myself.

Śakāra. Shout away. Shout for the sprout, the cuckoo, the bee, and

the starling; the whole month of Spring.¹ Who in the world will protect you?

Like Vishṇu am I, the lord of the corpse bazaar, or Janamejaya, Kuntī's son. I shall catch thee with my hand in thy hair and carry thee off as Duḥśāsana did to Sītā.² (12)

Parasite. Vasantasenā, put me down as a man whose heart is entirely innocent of fear. Look you,

The murk of night is familiar to me from the blackness of my character.

Again and again have I passed through side-alleys shady with unending darkness. Though I should not say this before a young woman, go and ask the policemen in the market-place, who have escaped being murdered? (13)

Courtesan. Now I am in a pretty pass. Will these men who vaunt their own qualities abstain from evil deeds?

Parasite. Lady, kindly comply with our request. Look you,

It is a cause of wrath when a civil request is refused. When such as I are full of wrath what is it they cannot do? Thou art wooed by this powerful hand, made longer by my sword. Save me, save thyself from the horror of a maiden's murder. (14)

Courtesan. Even his wooing is most alarming.

Śākāra. Vasantasenā, the doctor is quite right.

The suit of such a mighty man is rare and you should make much of it. Look you, my wench,

Right sharp is the sword, blue as the peacock's neck. I'll cut off thy head or else I'll slay thee. Have done with enraging men like us. When a man's dead he lives no more. (15)

Courtesan. Good sir, I am but a courtesan who gets her living by the virtuous entertainment of the scions of nobility.

Parasite. Yes, that's why we're after you.

Courtesan. Good sir, what can you want from a little woman like me, her person or her jewellery?

Parasite. Who would strip a creeper of its flowers?

Have done—with your jewellery.

Courtesan. Well, then there is no need to worry.

Śākāra. Vasantasenā. You must love me, I am a prince.

Courtesan. Rest in peace.

¹ Play on the names of Vasantasenā's servants.

² Mythology muddled, somewhat like

'Apollo Lord of Hades, Romulus son of Helen'. Something similar in *The Little Clay Cart*.

Śakāra. Listen to that, doctor. She thinks I need a rest.

Parasite. [*Aside.*] The fool doesn't see she's cursing him.

She means he'll be dead, and he thinks she means 'tired'. Besides, Gesticulating with all his limbs, he utters rubbish devoid of sense. His movements are uncouth, his speech is debased.

A new incarnation of a beast in human form. (16)

[*Aloud.*] Vasantasenā, what is this you are saying to my face? This is contrary to the ways of your house. Mind you,

The dwelling of a courtesan must be reckoned the friend of all the youth. Remember thou art like the flowering tree that grows beside the road. Thy body is a chattel to be bought at a price, so serve the man you love, fair lady, and serve the man you hate. (17)

Courtesan. The nobility appreciate my devotion.

Śakāra. Doctor, here is a lane full of the deepest gloom. Don't let her slip away down there. Ever since the Love God's festival she's been sweet on a lad called Cārudatta, a poor merchant's son, firm only in her eyes. This is the side-door of his house.

Courtesan. [*Delighted. Aside.*] This is his house.

Fortunately I have been brought near my beloved by the persecution of my enemies. Good, I'll do it! [*Slips away.*]

Śakāra. [*Looking round.*] Eh, doctor, she's lost, the baggage is lost, I say.

Parasite. What do you mean by 'lost'? Search her out, search her out!

Śakāra. She's nowhere to be seen, doctor.

Parasite. Confound it all, we have been cheated. Vasantasenā, I know now where you are.

Albeit thou art not visible in the evening dusk, like a lightning flash confined in the belly of a cloud, thy jingling ornaments will betray thee and thy perfume wafted by the breeze. (18)

[*The Courtesan removes her garland and throws off her ornaments.*]

Parasite. Ah! This darkness is plaguey thick. For now,

Darkness anoints my limbs, the sky it seems is raining lamp-black; my sight is useless, like service rendered to a rascal. (19)

Moreover,

As a ready shelter and as a source of dangers, darkness is the equal of a deep forest. Both are protected by the dark, what causes terror and the terrified. (20)

Again,

My eyes are staring wide to see, but all at once are completely

wrapped in darkness ; open though they are, they seem to be closed by the gloom. (21)

Courtesan. Oh, the side-door seems to be by the end of the wall. The gloom of disappointment makes the darkness thicker. So I shall wait here. [*Does so.*]

Hero. Maitreya, go and make oblation to the mothers in the square.

Jester. I have no faith. Let somebody else go.

Hero. What do you mean ?

Jester. My intellect is like the reflection in a mirror, right for left and left for right.

Hero. Idiot ! One must worship according to one's means. The feeling of devotion satisfies the deities. So go along.

Jester. How can I go all alone ?

Hero. Radanikā, accompany this gentleman.

Radanikā. As you order, sir.

Jester. I will bring the lamp, lady.

Hero.¹ As you think best, very well.

Jester. [*Taking the lamp.*] Open the side-door, Radanikā.

Radanikā. [*Opening the door.*] There you are.

[*Courtesan puts out the lamp with the end of her robe.*]

Jester. Oh, damn !

Hero. What's the matter, comrade ?

Jester. I was going out, and when the door was opened a filthy gust of wind came in from the street and put out the lamp in my hand.

Hero. Tut ! What a fool you are.

Jester. It was only a small mistake. Radanikā, go and wait for me in the square. I'll come in a moment with a lamp from the inner room.

Maid. Very well, sir. [*Steps round.*]

Courtesan. Good, the door is open, so I can enter. This is no time to hesitate about the proprieties. I shall go in. [*Goes inside and waits.*]

Parasite. [*Looking round, aside.*] Here is a woman who has come out of the house and is coming this way. Good. I'll palm her off on this swine.

[*Aloud.*] Here is a smell that reeks of the perfume of a scented bath.

Śākāra. Ay, doctor, I can hear the smell with my own ears, but I can't see properly, my nostrils are so full of fog.

Parasite. Stop, stop. Where are you going. [*Catches the maid.*]

[*The maid falls to the ground in fright.*]

Śākāra. Catch her, doctor, catch her.

¹ Should be the maid, Radanikā.

Parasite. In the pride of her youth she spurned the scions of nobility. Now she is dragged along by her tresses that should be dressed with flowers. (22)

Śakāra. Have you caught her, doctor?

Parasite. Why, yes. I caught her by following the scent.

Śakāra. I'll cut her bloody head off and then I'll kill her.

Parasite. Catch hold of her then.

Śakāra. [*Catching hold of the maid.*]

Now I've got the wench by the head, by the hair, by the locks, and by the tresses. Now you may coo, or squeak, or scream to God, to the Lord, or to the Almighty. (23)

[*Drags the maid violently along.*]

Maid. Gentlemen! What are you going to do?

Śakāra. I say, doctor, I can tell from her voice this is not Vasantasenā.

Parasite. Don't let her go. Of course it's Vasantasenā.

She's been on the stage and she is trained in the arts, so she's clever at changing her voice. So do not release her. (24)

[*Enter the Jester with a lamp.*]

Jester. I have managed to bring the lamp, but it is difficult to keep it in. There's a cool breeze blowing down the street, and every step I take shakes up the oil in the bowl into waves.

Maid. [*Kicking Śakāra and screaming.*] Oh, sir! Maitreya! Is this an insult or simply insolence?

Jester. None of that, now, none of that.

[*Sees that the Parasite and Śakāra have swords, hesitates and stops.*]

Parasite. Ah! this is Maitreya, the noble Cārudatta's comrade. This, then, is not Vasantasenā. Great brahman, we have not acted thus through overweening pride, but owing to a mistaken identity. Look you, sir,

We were in pursuit of a certain lady, mistress of her youth, who denies us. She has eluded us. We mistook this lady for the same, hence this breach of good behaviour. (25)

Śakāra. Drat it! This is a maidservant of that fellow Cārudatta, the son of a miserable merchant. This is not Vasantasenā. Bravo, Vasantasenā! The doctor was deceived by its being dark in between. And I was deceived by the tricky slippery wench. Anyhow, it's a bad business.

Jester. Nay now, this is not right.

Parasite. Great brahman, lo, I fold my hands, which is the essence of entreaty.

Jester. Very well. You're not to blame. It's I that am to blame for letting you wheedle me.

Śākāra. I say, doctor, you seem mightily afraid of that fellow Cārudatta, the son of a miserable merchant.

Parasite. Truly, I am afraid of him.

Śākāra. Why, doctor, why?

Parasite. Because of his virtues. Look you,

He is beggared by the suits of men like me.

There is none but has been adorned by his riches. He is like a great tank dried up in summer, but it dried up after quenching men's thirst. (26)

Great brahman, please don't tell the merchant's son about this business.

[Exit Parasite.]

Śākāra. Mārisha, my lad, take a message from me to that fellow Cārudatta, son of a miserable merchant—'the king's brother-in-law, Saṁsthāna, salutes you with his turbaned head and says, "An actress, named Vasantasenā, daughter of a courtesan of the gold caste, being taken in arrest by two of us, has entered your house with a lot of gold ornaments. She must be handed over to-morrow. Otherwise there will be serious trouble between us." And Mārisha, my lad, you can go on to say. "Otherwise, you son of a slave, I'll crack your skull-cap like a garlic root in the beak of a turtle-dove; otherwise, I'll chew up your head like a ripe apple caught between two doors.'

Jester. Oh, you will, will you? [*Frightens the Śākāra with the lamp.*]

Śākāra. [*Looking all round.*] Where's the doctor? He's gone. Hi! doctor! [*Exit Śākāra.*]

Jester. Let us report to the noble Cārudatta that the oblation has been offered to the deities. Put away resentment from your heart, my good girl. Don't say anything about this affair indoors.

Maid. I shall be mum, sir.¹

Jester. Come, let us go.

[Both step around.]

Hero. Has the oblation been offered to the deities, my good girl?

Courtesan. [*Aside.*] He mistakes me for his maid. Never mind, I am saved.

Hero. The evening is inclined to be windy. So take this mantle.

Courtesan. [*Taking the mantle, joyfully.*] This garment has a scent of perfume, that shows he is not quite indifferent to the vanities of youth.

Hero. Radanikā, you had better go into the inner room.

¹ Lit. 'I am Radanikā', i. e. all teeth (and no tongue).

Courtesan. [*Aside.*] Not I. I have no right to enter there.

Hero. Well, why don't you go in?

Courtesan. What am I to say now?

Hero. Why are you loitering, Radanikā?

[*Enter Radanikā and the Jester.*]

Radanikā. My good master, here I am.

Hero. Who, then, is this lady?

In ignorance I ventured to press my garment on her. She shines like a digit of the moon enclosed in autumn clouds. (27)

Courtesan. [*Aside.*] There he is, his beauty lit up by the lamp, for whose sake I inhabit this body, kept together only by sighs.

Jester. Cārudatta, the king's brother-in-law, Saṃsthāna, salutes you with his turbaned head and says, 'An actress named Vasantasenā, daughter of a courtesan, being taken in arrest by two of us, has entered your house with a lot of gold ornaments. She must be handed over to-morrow.'

Courtesan. [*Aside.*] He calls it 'taken in arrest', does he? Well, this is my opportunity. [*Aloud.*] Sir, I throw myself on your protection.

Hero. Don't be afraid, don't be afraid. Is this Vasantasenā?

Jester. Oh, yes, this is Vasantasenā. [*Aside to Cārudatta.*] This is the Vasantasenā, whom your eyes have extolled ever since the Love God's festival, who is exalted by your love-sick heart. So look at her.

Hero. I can see her, comrade.

Love has come to me, when the mass of my wealth has left me.

It must subside in my own breast like a coward's wrath. (28)

Courtesan. I have done wrong, sir, to enter boldly, uninvited. I bow my head, and ask your pardon.

Hero. If so, I also am to blame for treating you unawares like a servant, and I ask your pardon.

Jester. Oh, these two are worrying each other like a pair of ill-trained bullocks pulling a cart in opposite directions. Whose pardon shall I ask? I know, Radanikā's. Radanikā, I beseech your ladyship to pardon me.

Hero. I am no longer independent, lady. What place is there for affection?

Courtesan. [*Aside.*] Sweet indeed, what we would like would be. But it wouldn't do to stay here on our first meeting, especially as I came here of my own accord. I know what. [*Aloud.*] If, sir, I am pardoned, will you let me leave my ornaments here? Wickèd men follow me because of my jewellery. And I would like to go to my house, sir, under your protection.

Hero. Her suggestion is quite reasonable. Maitreya, take the jewels.

Jester. Nay, I have no faith.

Hero. Take them, idiot.

Jester. As you command. Bring them over, lady.

[Courtesan takes off her jewellery and hands it over.]

Jester. *[Taking them.]* Radanikā, take this golden jewellery and keep it on the sixth and seventh. I'll keep them on the eighth, which is a holiday.

Radanikā. *[Laughing.]* The young master will have a rest from his studies, so you will have some spare time. Hand them over, sir.

Hero. Ho, without there! bring a lantern.

Jester. There's no oil in the lantern, as there is no affection in a courtesan.

Hero. Well, there is no need of a lantern. *[Gazing out.]* The moon has risen, the common lamp for all the world. So,

Here rises the moon, pale yellow like soft dates, the light of
the highway, the escort of young ladies. The white beams fall
amid the dense darkness like streams of milk on dried-up
mire. (29)

Lady, now you can go on the king's highway. My friend, follow this lady.

Jester. As you command. Come, lady.

[Exeunt omnes.]

END OF THE FIRST ACT.

ACT II

[Vasantasenā's house.]

[Enter the Courtesan and a Maidservant.]

Courtesan. And what then?

Maid. But I said nothing. Why do you ask, 'What then'?

Courtesan. Did I say anything, my dear?

Maid. Mistress dear, it's love, not curiosity, asks the question, What are you thinking about?

Courtesan. What would you guess, my dear?

Maid. I believe that contrary to the needs of her profession my mistress is in love with some one.

Courtesan. You have guessed right. Your perception is unerring. That's what's the matter with me.

Maid. I see my mistress has made her toilet without her jewellery. The Lord of Love is the unsung festival of the young.

Courtesan. Silly girl, what can you feel for my beloved?

Maid. Mistress dear, I want to ask, is he some prince as charming as he's grand?

Courtesan. I wish to love, not to serve.

Maid. Well, then, is it some young brahman fascinating with his deep learning?

Courtesan. Do the highly respected ever relax their self-control? I should have to reverence him.

Maid. Is it a visitor, some merchant's son?

Courtesan. Lunatic! What woman in love could endure the disappearance of her hopes?

Maid. Can't I hear, then, who has possessed your heart?

Courtesan. Didn't you go to the Love God's festival?

Maid. Yes, I did.

Courtesan. Then why do you talk as if you knew nothing about it?

Maid. Oh, tell me, mistress dear, tell me, tell me!

Courtesan. Listen, my dear. It's the young merchant, Cārudatta.

Maid. Who protected you when you sought shelter?

Courtesan. The very same.

Maid. Unfortunately—he is poor.

Courtesan. That's why I am in love with him. A courtesan attached to a very poor man earns no reproach.

Maid. My dear mistress, do the bees settle on a mango when the flowers have fallen?

Courtesan. That's so, my dear, they settle—and that's why they are called¹ bees.

Maid. What if he doesn't come? The loss of his wealth might make him shy of frequenting a courtesan's house.

Courtesan. But it is I that am in love with him.

Maid. If you think so much of him, why don't you go to him?

Courtesan. I don't say I won't go. But I am putting it off, because if I went all of a sudden and he couldn't give me a present, I mightn't be able to see him again.

Maid. Ah, then that was why you left your jewellery in his house.

Courtesan. Quite so.

[*Enter a Shampooer, in great haste.*]

¹ *Pucchanti, Mṛceḥ has vuccanti.*

Shampooer. Lady, I seek your protection.

Courtesan. Come, calm yourself.

Maid. Oh, but who is this fellow?

Courtesan. Silly girl, does one question one who seeks protection?

Maid. All the same, he might be a violent person.

Courtesan. Silly girl, the virtuous must always be protected.

Shampooer. Lady, I forgot my manners through terror, not from impudence. You know, lady, those who are scared, harried, in an accident, or easily put about, may readily offend.

Courtesan. Never mind, sir, be at your ease. I am only a courtesan.

Shampooer. By birth only, not by character.

Courtesan. Yes, my dear.

Maid. Mistress would like to know what frightened you.

Shampooer. A dun, lady.

Courtesan. If that is so, give the gentleman a seat.

Maid. Very well. [*Offers a seat.*]

Courtesan. Sit down, sir.

Shampooer. [*Aside.*] She's so polite about it, I suppose I must. [*Sits down.*]

Courtesan. One moment, my dear. [*Whispers.*]

Maid. Oh, my mistress, really? Sir, my mistress would like to set you on the road free of embarrassments. What is due, and to whom?

Shampooer. Listen, lady.

Courtesan. I am all attention.

Shampooer. I was born in Pāṭaliputra. By origin I am a trader, but owing to the vicissitudes of fortune I now follow the profession of a shampooer.

Courtesan. So you are a shampooer. You have learned a very delicate art.

Shampooer. I learned it as an art. Now it is my livelihood.

Courtesan. Your words point to a bitter experience. Well, what then?

Shampooer. Why, mistress, as I'd heard about it from travellers and was keen on meeting distinguished people, I've come here to Ujjain.

Courtesan. Well?

Shampooer. When I got here, I fell in with a certain young merchant.

Courtesan. What was he like?

Shampooer. A fine figure of a man, dignified, but not arrogant, charming but not conscious of his charm, clever but kindly, able but very polite, generally esteemed, calm and collected but easy to please. Generous without boasting of it, he always remembered even trifling obligations but forgot all the wrongs done to him. In short good

mistress, one could not describe the quarter of the virtues of this noble youth in the longest summer day. To sum it up, he is so kind he treats his body as if it were a trust.

Courtesan. [*Aside to her Maid.*] My dear, who can it be, that imitates the virtues of the noble Cārudatta?

Maid. I am curious to hear who it is that adorns Ujjain with his virtues.

Courtesan. Well, go on.

Shampooer. Then, being completely won by his qualities, I forgot my wife and became one of his attendants.

Courtesan. Isn't he poor?

Shampooer. How could you tell that, lady, without being told?

Courtesan. It is difficult to find wealth and merit together. Go on.

Maid. What's the gentleman's name?

Shampooer. Cārudatta.

Courtesan. I thought as much. Well, what then?

Shampooer. Then, on account of his scanty means, he dismissed his attendants and, relieved of the burden of a household, he is living in the merchant's house with nothing left but his character. My master asked me to find another employer. I thought I could never find another jewel of a man like him. Nor would I sully this hand by shampooing common men after touching his tender charming exquisite body. So I was filled with disgust for the world, but to keep my blasted body going I became a professional gambler.

[*The Courtesan looks at her Maid with tears of joy.*]

Maid. Well then?

Shampooer. Then one day I lost ten pieces of gold to a man from whom I had won for several days.

Courtesan. Yes?

Shampooer. Then to-day, when I happened to be near the street of pretty ladies, I ran across the man. It was from fear of him I came in here. So now your ladyship knows all about it.

Courtesan. [*Aside.*] Alack-a-day! It is sad to think how the birds are scattered on the destruction of the sheltering tree. [*Aloud.*] And so you have come to us. Go, girl, and send that man away.

Maid. Very well. [*Exit.*]

Courtesan. You need not worry, sir, about the money. You may regard it as a present from the noble Cārudatta.

[*Enter the Maid.*]

Maid. I sent the man away, mistress. He went away quite satisfied.

Shampooer. I am much obliged to you.

Courtesan. Good sir, you may go, and give us the pleasure of seeing you again.

Shampooer. I am disgusted with the world, and shall renounce it this very day. But if this art of mine were entrusted to your humble servant I should be very grateful to your ladyship.

Courtesan. It would be better to attend on him for whose sake you learned this art.

Shampooer. [*Aside.*] A clever way of declining my services. For who will spoil a favour by accepting a return for it? [*Aloud.*] Lady, I take my leave.

Courtesan. Good-bye, sir, till we meet again.

Shampooer. Amen to that, lady. [*Exit.*]

Courtesan. Hullo. What noise is that?

[*Enter a Page.*]

Page. Vicchittikā, where is the mistress?

Courtesan. What's the matter, boy?

Page. Oh, I am so disappointed that my mistress did not see Kārṇapūra's valiant deed. If only she had seen, leaning forward from the casement with bosom bowed . . .

Courtesan. Feather-headed people are easily amazed. What is the cause of your excitement?

Page. Oh, mistress, listen. The sacred elephant, Bhadrakapota, was returning at great speed from a bath, making the high road fragrant with his flowing ichor. And in the street, crowded with innumerable people, he made for an ascetic, who was conspicuous by the red colour of his robe.

Courtesan. Oh, yes, go on.

Page. Then the elephant caught hold of the ascetic by the feet, hauled him up and knocked him about with his trunk. So there he lay between the two tusks. And the people cried, 'Alas, alas, he is torn in pieces, alas, alas, he is killed!' Then I released him, driving away the elephant with blows of my fist.

Courtesan. I am glad of that—go on.

Page. Then everybody said, 'Bravo, boy, well done', but nobody wanted to give me anything. Then, mistress, some young nobleman looked down where ornaments are usually worn and felt with his fingers, but finding nothing, he sighed deeply and reviled his fate. Then he sent me this mantle by an attendant, saying it was all he had.

Courtesan. Who is this that emulates the virtues of Cārudatta?

Maid. I, too, am very curious to know who it can be.

Courtesan. It must be a very good man.

Maid. Well, ask him.

Courtesan. Ah, my dear, partiality for one man kills all other qualities.

Maid. Do you know his name, dear boy?

Page. No, I don't know.

Courtesan. You were very thoughtless.

Maid. Well, then, what did you say to him?

Page. I do know this—the gentleman is not at all proud.

Courtesan. Come, let us have a look at him.

Page. Look, mistress, here he comes.

Courtesan. [*Looking from the parapet.*] My dear, why it is the self-same Cārudatta. He has nothing but his sacred thread for an upper garment. Let us look at him before he is too far away.

[*Exeunt omnes.*]

END OF THE SECOND ACT.

ACT III

[*Street. Then Hero's house and a room in it.*]

[*Enter the Hero and the Jester.*]

Hero. Ah! comrade. The lute is a jewel, though not from the sea.¹
For,

Like a friend, it is in tune with a lover's heart, a discourse of purest tone on the objects of his passion. A delightful companion where the torments of love are nothing but play, but a real rival to the ladies who delay their delights. (1)

Jester. What's the time, my friend? The street is deserted as if by proclamation. Even the dogs have gone to sleep. But we get no sleep at all. There's another funny thing. I don't enjoy the cursed lute. I wish its strings would snap in the thickest place.

Hero. But, comrade, the master's² singing to-day was extremely sweet. Didn't you enjoy that?

Jester. That's why I didn't enjoy it. Too much sweet stuff is indigestible.

Hero. Besides, his voice was beautifully clear.

Melodious, sweet at the highest pitch and equally clear, full of feeling but free from flourishes. But why praise him in

¹ All jewels like pearls were supposed to come from the sea.

² Bhāva-Śābala. Professor Variegato.

various ways, quoting this and that—were he behind a wall, I should think it was a woman. (2)

Jester. You may praise him if you like. But as for me, I don't care for a man singing nor a woman reading. A man singing cuts a sorry figure like a priest garlanded with red flowers. And a woman reading is as ghastly as a cow with a slit nose.

Hero. My friend, midnight is upon us.

The streets are wrapped in darkness. Traffic has stopped, and Ujjain seems fast asleep. For,

That eight-day moon gives place to darkness and sets, as when
a woodland elephant plunges into water, the curved end of his
tusk is gradually submerged. (3)

Jester. You're quite right. The darkness gets its chance when the moon disappears and seems to steal down from the roof.

Hero. [*Stepping about.*] Here is our house.

Vardhamānavaka! Vardhamānavaka!

Jester. Vardhamānavaka! Vardhamānavaka, open the door.

[*Enter a Servant.*]

Servant. Hullo, it's the noble Maitreya.

Hero. Vardhamānavaka!

Servant. Oh, the master! Sir, I salute you.

Hero. Bring water to wash our feet.

Servant. [*Stepping round.*] Here is the foot-water. [*Washes the Hero's feet.*]

Jester. Vardhamānavaka, wash my feet too.

Servant. When your feet are well washed you'll go rolling on the ground. Pour away the water. Nay bring them here, I'll wash 'em. [*Indicates the washing of the Jester's feet.*]

Jester. The scoundrel has not only washed my feet, but my face too.

Hero. Comrade.

Sleep descends upon mine eyes and from my brow creeps over
me, unseen, elusive, like old age, that waxes greater as it saps
a mortal's strength. (4)

Let ūs sleep, Maitreya.

[*Exit Servant.*]

[*Enter the Maid with a casket of jewels in her hands.*]

Maid. Master Maitreya, wake up, do.

Jester. What is it, lady?

Maid. I was to look after this gold box on the sixth and seventh. To-day is the eighth.

Hero. Is this the property of Vasantasenā?

Maid. Yes. Oh, tell him, Master, he must take it.

Hero. Take it, Maitreya.

Jester. Why don't you send this jewellery into the inner apartments?

Hero. Idiot! Somebody in the house must not see jewellery worn by outsiders.

Jester. No way out of it. Bring it here. I'll take it. It's sure to be stolen by thieves.

[*Maid gives it to him and exit.*]

Jester. I say. Why did you give your mantle to the courtesan's servant?

Hero. From sympathy.

Jester. What, sympathy even for that creature?

Hero. Nay, my friend, speak not so.

Jester. I have to roll on the ground like a pack donkey.

Hero. I am sleepy. Be quiet.

Jester. Sleep well and wake refreshed. Well. I'll go to sleep too.

[*Both sleep.*]

[*Enter Sajjalaka.*]

Sajjalaka. Here I am,

I have made a road for my work by strength and skill in my art, an entrance easy for the body's girth. In I glide like a snake that sloughs his worn-out skin by rubbing his sides as he creeps along the ground. (5)

Ha! I have come in here by cutting a hole in the garden wall. Now I must get into the inner rooms.

[*Thinks anxiously.*] Ah!

Let the wiseacres call it low, this business when folks are asleep, for the shame of cheating those that are trustful comes from daring, not from cruelty. Independence though of ill report is better far than the folded hands of servility. This was the road that was taken of old by Droṇa's son when he slew the sleeping kings. (6)

[*Reflects.*] As for a merchant greedy and rich, despising honest folk, ruthless in his business, if I get hold of his house, my mind is not overpowered with remorse. (7)

So let things wag. What doesn't the Love God drive us into? I must get to work. Ah!

Now where is the spot where the bricks have been loosened by running water and can be breached without a sound? Where can a yawning cavity be easily made in the wall to show the interior? Where is the mansion decayed, rotten with salt-

petre and thinned by falling bricks? Which way can I avoid the sight of women and crown my efforts with success? (8)
[Steps round.] This is the operation called quartering the site. The presence of moisture shows this foundation to be the best in the house. It is here I shall make room for an entrance. Now what kind of breach should I make?

Lion's stride or full-orbed moon? The jaws of a pike or semi-circular? Tiger's maw or triangular? Like a stool or like an elephant's mouth? How should we amaze the votaries of our art? (9)
 So be it, I'll carve the 'lion's stride'.

Jester. I say. You're awake, aren't you?

Hero. What is it?

Jester. I can't sleep any more than a Buddhist monk that's made an assignation with a servant girl. My left eye is throbbing. I believe I can see a thief cutting a hole in the wall. If this is what it feels like to have wealth, I would be a poor man by caste.

Hero. Tut! What a fool you are, longing for poverty.

Sajjalaka. Now what shall I use to measure the breach?

This will do, sacred thread by day and measuring line by night.

To-night I pierce the walls of this house leaving them smooth after the cutting and touching them once with the burglar's drone.¹

To-morrow the neighbours will foregather with long and gloomy faces to discuss my errors and the skill of my work. (10)

Praise be to the Lord of Thieves. Praise to the Gods that go by night.

[Makes the breach.] Ha! ha! 'tis done. Let's go in. *[Enters.]* Oh, there's a lamp burning. I must be off. Nay now, I am Sajjalaka,

A cat to leap, a wolf to slink away, a snake to glide, a hawk to sight a mouse; like sleep to weigh the strength of slumberers. Illusion's self in donning disguise of form or hue, goddess of speech in the lingos of the land, a light by night, in danger darkness, like the wind on land, like a boat on water. (11)

[Looking all round.] As a stranger, I know nothing of the extent of this man's affluence. I came in relying simply on the appearance of the mansion. But now I don't see anything special in the way of furniture. Is he but a poor man after all? Or does he keep what's

¹ Low-toned instrument to ascertain if all are asleep.

worth seeing hidden away and out of use? Yet the mansion is nobly planned. He must have squandered his wealth on pleasure.

So, though short of funds, he keeps the house, when it's time to sell, because it is his birth-place and he loves it dearly.¹ (12)

Well we must see. Or rather a gentleman no better off than myself should not be troubled. I will go.

Jester. Oh, take this golden casket.

Sajjalaka. Eh, what? 'Golden casket' says he? Had he seen me, when he spoke? Or through lack of self-control was he talking in his sleep? We must have a look. [*Takes a look at him.*] He is really asleep. For,

His breathing is regular and steady and comes at even intervals.

His body is stretched out with joints relaxed, too long for the bed. His eyes are firmly closed, not rolling beneath the lids.

Nor could he bear to face the lamp, if he were feigning sleep. (13)

Now where is it? Ah, now it is visible in the light of the lamp wrapped in a piece of an old cloak. He has got his arms round it. The moment has come. Here I have some moths. I let one loose to extinguish the lamp. [*Lets one loose from a bee-box.*] Ah he's down and the lamp's out.

Jester. Damn it, now the lamp's gone out. I shall be robbed. Ho, Cārudatta, do take this golden jewellery. I can't sleep for fright, like a trader who's got off the right road. I'll curse you with a brahman's curse if you don't take it.

Sajjalaka. No need of imprecations, I will take it. [*Takes it.*]

Jester. [*After handing it over.*] Now I shall sleep soundly like a trader who has sold all his wares.

Sajjalaka. Sleep sound, great brahman. [*Reflects.*] Ah! ought I to take what a brahman gives me in confidence?

A curse on poverty. Young blood has no remorse. For I blame this cruel deed and do it. (14)

[*A drum is beaten behind the scene.*]

Sajjalaka. [*Listens.*] Ah! It is dawn. I must be off at once.

[*Exit Sajjalaka.*]

[*Enter a Maidservant.*]

Maid. [*Shouting.*] Master Maitreya. A thief has been and cut a hole in the orchard door and got into the house.

Jester. [*Getting up in a hurry.*] What do you say, girl?

[*Maid repeats what she said before.*]

¹ *Nīlasneha*, affection constant as (the colour of) indigo.

Jester. Cut a hole in the thief? And the breach came in?

Maid. Drat the man. The thief cut the hole and got into the house.

Jester. Come and show me.

Maid. [*Stepping round.*] There.

Jester. Damn it all, the rascally dog got in all right.

Come lady, I will break the pleasant news to Cārudatta.

[*Both return to Cārudatta.*]

Cārudatta. I've got some pleasant news for you.

Hero. [*Waking.*] What is this pleasant news for me? Has Vasantasenā come?

Jester. No, not a lady, but a gentleman.¹

Hero. What does he mean, Radanikā?

Maid. Oh, Sir, a thief has cut a hole in our orchard door and got into the house.

Hero. A burglar got in?

Jester. Ah, my friend, you are always saying 'Maitreya is a fool, Maitreya is a blockhead'. But I did well to entrust that golden casket to your hands.

Hero. You gave it to me?

Jester. Why, of course!

Hero. At what time?

Jester. At midnight.

Hero. At midnight you say? You really gave it to me?

Jester. Yes, Cārudatta, I gave it to you while you were awake.

Hero. [*Aside.*] Alas! the golden casket has been stolen.

Jester. Now you had better give it back to me.

Hero. [*Aside.*] Who will credit the truth? Every one will suspect me. For in all crimes powerless poverty is suspect. (15)

[*Enter a Brahman lady.*]

Lady. Radanikā! Radanikā! Come here. She doesn't hear. I must knock on the door. [*Does so.*]

Maid. Oh, a knock on the door. My mistress calls me.

[*Stepping round.*] Here I am, mistress.

Lady. They are not wounded or killed? My husband or Master Maitreya?

Maid. They are both all right. But that person's jewellery has been stolen by a burglar.

Lady. What do you say? Stolen by a burglar?

Maid. Yes.

Lady. What recompense can we give that person? Nay, I will give

¹ Not *Vasantasenā* (fem.) but *Vasantasena* (masc.)

this. [*Puts her hands to her ears.*] Alas! only palm leaf. Old habit is mocking me. Now what shall I do? [*Reflects.*] Yes, I know. There is the pearl necklace worth a lakh that I have from my family. My lord is so munificent, he will give that instead. Good, that's what I'll do. [*Exit.*]

Jester. With bowed head I entreat your pardon for this fault due to the dark. Now you can give it back to me.¹

Hero. What, are you pressing me now?

Thou knowest my character day by day, yet thou hast misgivings. How much more so one that lives by the arts, learned in deceits? (16)

[*Remains in grief.*]

Jester. I believe, wretched fellow that I am, that I handed it to the burglar.

[*Enter the Brahman Lady.*]

Lady. Radanikā, call Master Maitreya here.

Maid. Master Maitreya, the mistress calls you.

Jester. What me, lady?

Maid. Yes.

Jester. Here I come. [*Approaches.*]

Lady. Master Maitreya, accept this donation.

Jester. This costly present is not in keeping with our circumstances. Why does this come to me?

Lady. Why on the sixth day I observe a fast. I desire the blessing of a brahman propitiated by the best of my possessions; that's why it comes to you.

Jester. But to-day is the eighth.

Lady. My neglect is due to thoughtlessness. The rite is completed to-day.

Jester. This gift is so lavish it savours of compassion. [*Aside to the Maid.*] What shall I do, Radanikā?

Maid. [*Aside to him.*] My mistress gives it to you to free the master from debt, because she thinks he must be worried about what to give that person. So you'd better take it.

Lady. Pearls grow in water and it was difficult to meet you, so my duty slipped by. Please accept. [*Gives the necklace.*]

Jester. [*Taking the necklace.*] May all be well. But there are tears in your eyes.

Lady. The temple smoke has made my eyes water.

Jester. The noble Cārudatta will curse you, if that is untrue.

¹ paḍicchadu. ? read paacchadu.

Lady. Alas! [*Exit.*]

Jester. She has gone without betraying her grief in words, but her tears make it plain. [*Going up to the Hero.*] Well, here it is.

Hero. What is it?

Jester. The result of marrying a lady of your own rank.

Hero. What, my wife takes pity on me?

Jester. As you see.

Hero. Fie on me! To-day I am crushed indeed.

So reduced am I by loss of wealth, the man is rescued by a woman's help. The man in fact is but a woman, and the woman is the man. (17)

Jester. Her ladyship entreats you from her heart, I entreat you with my bowed head. Please accept it.

Hero. Very well. [*Takes the pearls.*] Comrade, take this pearl necklace to Vasantasenā.

My desire that found its pleasure in my wealth now pays unseemly court to women's treasures, loitering behind both pride and duty. What's family pride if a man is a pauper? (18)

Jester. Alack-a-day! here's a necklace worth a lakh to replace a trumpery golden casket.

Hero. Nay, comrade, say not so.

She trusted us in making this deposit. Give her this present as the price of her great confidence. (19)

[*Exeunt omnes.*]

END OF THE THIRD ACT.

ACT IV

[*Enter Vasantasenā in love and a Maid with a portrait-panel holding paint-box and brushes in her hand.*]

Courtesan. Look, my good girl. Is it like him?

Maid. My dear mistress, that's just how he looked, that prince among men, when I saw him from a distance—with my eyes respectfully cast down—in the confusion of the struggle with the elephant.

Courtesan. 'None so sly as those that serve a courtesan.' You fulfill the proverb and are telling fibs.

Maid. What's that? 'Every servant of a courtesan is sincere'? Look you, my Mistress, *nimbu* trees do grow in a *campaka*¹ garden. I am

¹ *Michelia champaka*, with yellow flowers.

delighted that it is so very like. In very truth it does him honour, I mean the God of Love.

Courtesan. My good girl, I do not allow my friends to make a mock of me.

Maid. That is right. Courtesans, they say, find rival wives in their own girl friends.

[*Enter another Maid with her hands full of ornaments.*]

Second Maid. Is my mistress well?

Courtesan. You are welcome, my good girl.

Second Maid. Mistress mine, your mamma sends this message. 'The blue lotus carriage has returned and just come into the gateway. So be quick with your finery and come with your veil.' Here are the ornaments, put them on.

Courtesan. Will the noble Cārudatta grace us with a visit?

Second Maid. No, the man who sent the ornaments is Saṃsthāna the king's brother-in law.

Courtesan. Away with you, insolent creature!

Second Maid. Forgive me, mistress mine, forgive me, I was only giving the message. [*Falls at her feet.*]

Courtesan. Get up, get up, 'tis the evil message I am displeased with, not with you.

Second Maid. What am I to say to your mamma?

Courtesan. Tell her that I will put on my finery if I am to meet the noble Cārudatta.

Second Maid. Very well. [*Exit.*]

[*Enter Sajjalaka.*]

Sajjalaka. By night I did a famous wrong, overcoming sleep and darkling fear. But with the rising of the sun my valour grows gradually fainter like the moon in daylight, and I am frightened. (1)

Fortunately my work was finished before dawn. I have just done this to compensate Vasantasenā for her lady's-maid Madanikā. [*Steps around.*]

This is Vasantasenā's house. I will go in. [*Enters.*] Now is Madanikā in the inner rooms? Why yes, in the morning these people always stick to the inner rooms. So that's where she must be. I will call her. Madanikā! Madanikā!

Maid. [*Listening.*] That sounds like Sajjalaka's voice. My mistress is busy. So I will slip out. [*Coming out to Sajjalaka.*] Here I am.

Sajjalaka. Come here.

Maid. Why do you look so apprehensive?

Sajjalaka. Not at all, I want to tell you something.

Courtesan. My good girl, put this picture on my bed. [*Looking around.*] Where has the silly girl gone? Well, she can't have gone far. I'll have a look for her. [*Steps round and looks about.*] Oho, there she is, talking to some man, fairly drinking him up with most loving glances. I think it must be the man who wants me to let her go by purchase.

Sajjalaka. I will tell you a secret.

Courtesan. It is wrong to listen to other people's secrets, I will go.

Sajjalaka. Will Vasantasenā— [*Stops in the middle.*]

Courtesan. So I am the subject of this story. Very well, I shall listen. [*Comes back and waits.*]

Sajjalaka. Will she set you free for a compensation?

Courtesan. That is he. Good, I shall listen.

Maid. Sajjalaka, my mistress was the first to suggest setting me free.

Sajjalaka. Then offer her this and say,

These ornaments are fashioned as if to fit thee. Show them
not abroad, but wear them for love of me. (2)

Maid. Let me see them.

Sajjalaka. Take them. [*Shows them.*]

Maid. I seem to have seen this jewellery before.

Courtesan. It looks like mine.

Maid. Tell me, tell me, how did you get them?

Sajjalaka. Through love of you I did a violent deed.

Both Women. Oh, a man of violence!

Maid. [*Aside.*] Indeed it is hers. This fellow's face is troubled because of his cruel deed.¹ [*Aloud.*] Alas, for my sake you have imperilled both your life and your character.

Sajjalaka. Nonsense! Fortune² dwells with daring.

Maid. You are an ignoramus. For who, forsooth, will sell his body² for his life? But in whose house did you commit this breach of confidence?

Sajjalaka. As I heard in the morning, there was a merchant's son living in the Bankers' Square called Cārudatta.

Both Women. Oh dear! oh dear!

Sajjalaka. Gracious!

All thy limbs are drooping in distress, thine eyes dilated in
alarm. Thou art trembling like a wounded deer and quivering
with compassion. (3)

Maid. Tell me truly, when you were robbing the merchant's house

¹ Reading *didī massa*.

² Play on *Śrīr* and *Śarīra*.

did you kill a young man of the house, or wound him with your weapon?

Courtesan. Good, she has asked exactly what I wanted to ask myself.

Sajjalaka. Madanikā! Hadn't I done enough, that I should commit a second crime? No, I neither killed nor wounded anybody.

Maid. Is that true, Sajjalaka?

Sajjalaka. Quite true.

Maid. Good for you, Sajjalaka. My heart rejoices.¹

Sajjalaka. Your heart rejoices? What is the meaning of that? So, Madanikā,

I, that am sprung from forbears contented with their lot,
commit a crime, because my heart is bound with love of thee;
I keep this frame together torn by passion—and thou pretendest
I am thy friend but goest to another. (4)

Maid. Listen to me, Sajjalaka. This jewellery belongs to my mistress. [*Whispers.*] It was like this . . .

Sajjalaka. So,

Tormented by the summer heat and seeking shade I have
returned to the selfsame branch that I stripped erstwhile of all
its leaves in ignorance. (5)

Courtesan. I think he is repenting that he did the crime.²

Sajjalaka. That being so, what am I to do, Madanikā?

Maid. Return them where they were. My mistress will not put them on.

Sajjalaka. But if the gentleman should be angry and hand me over to the police as a thief, what shall I do then?

Maid. Don't be afraid. He is a gentleman, and will be conciliated by your good qualities.

Courtesan. Well said, my dear, you are beyond reproach. That speech of yours does you honour.

Sajjalaka. I can't go there, absolutely.

Maid. There's another way.

Courtesan. These are the tricks of the trade.

Sajjalaka. What's the other way?

Maid. Could the merchant or my lady recognize you?

Sajjalaka. No, not at all.

Maid. Well then, present this jewellery to my lady in the merchant's name. In this way you will be quite safe, that noble man will be free from anxiety, and I shall not be worried. Otherwise, if my lady is cheated again, I shall be back in slavery.

Sajjalaka. Madanikā, I agree.

¹ *Piam me.* 'I am glad' or 'My darling'.

² Reading defective?

Courtesan. Good, I will go and wait inside. [*Does so.*]

Maid. Come along, Sajjalaka. Wait for me in the Love God's temple. I will tell my lady as soon as I get a chance.

Sajjalaka. Splendid! [*Exit.*]

[*Enter another Maid.*]

Second Maid. Good luck, my lady. A brahman has come from a merchant's house to see you.

Courtesan. [*Respectfully.*] Go, show him in at once.

Second Maid. Very well. Come in, sir.

[*Enter the Jester.*]

Jester. [*Looking all' round.*] Oho, she's got a magnificent mansion, this courtesan. Visitors from various towns are busy reading. Various delicacies are being prepared. People are playing on lutes. Goldsmiths are carefully setting every kind of jewellery.

Second Maid. Here is my lady, sir. Go up to her.

Jester. [*Coming forward.*] Good health to your ladyship.

Courtesan. You are welcome, sir. Come, girl, a seat for the gentleman and water for his feet.

Jester. [*Aside.*] She can bring everything except food.

Maid. As my lady commands. [*Gives him a seat and water for his feet.*] Sit down, sir.

Jester. [*Sitting down.*] Please take a seat, lady. I have come to say something.

Courtesan. [*Sitting down.*] I am all attention.

Jester. What is the value of those ornaments?

Courtesan. Why do you ask me that, sir?

Jester. Listen, Lady. You deposited your jewellery with Cārudatta because you relied on his virtue, and he's lost it gambling.

Courtesan. Gambling? Quite so. Well?

Jester. So will your ladyship please accept this pearl necklace in payment for the jewellery?

Courtesan. [*Aside.*] Alack, what it is to be a courtesan! He thinks me greedy. If I do not take it, it will be the same trouble over again. Give it here, sir.

Jester. Here it is; take it, ma'am.

Courtesan. [*Taking hold of it.*] Please report that I accept it.

Jester. [*Aside.*] Not a word of polite refusal. [*Aloud.*] Very well. [*Hands it over and exit.*]

Courtesan. Bravo, Cārudatta, bravo! Though your fortune has changed you have saved your pride from a fall.

[*Enter Madanikā.*]

Madanikā. Oh, my lady, there's a man come from the house of a merchant's son and wants to see you.

Courtesan. Have I seen him before or is he a new comer?

Madanikā. No, lady, I think he is a dependent of that one.

Courtesan. Go, bring him in.

Madanikā. Very well. [*Exit.*]

Courtesan. Oh, what a delightful day!

[*Enter Madanikā with Sajjalaka.*]

Sajjalaka. 'Tis an ill thing an uneasy conscience.

If a man walks briskly by and looks at me, if he comes up quickly in confusion or stands still, my mind suspects them all alike; for a man's own guilt makes him apprehensive. (6)

Madanikā. Here is my lady. Go up to her.

Sajjalaka. [*Approaching.*] All happiness to your ladyship.

Courtesan. You are welcome, sir. My dear, give the gentleman a seat.

Sajjalaka. Nay, let be. Here is a seat. I have some very pressing business.

Courtesan. Very well. Speak out, sir.

Sajjalaka. I come from the noble Cārudatta with this message. He finds it difficult to take care of the jewellery entrusted to him because the house is unkempt through lack of use¹ and the family is away. So would you kindly take it back.

Courtesan. Come, sir, give it back to Cārudatta.

Sajjalaka. Lady, I am not going.

Courtesan. I know what it is, you have stolen that jewellery with violence from his house. You should respect his virtues, sir.

Sajjalaka. [*Aside.*] How did she find me out?

Courtesan. Ho there, a carriage for the gentleman!

Madanikā. I hear the sound of wheels. The carriage must have come.

Courtesan. [*Leading Madanikā with the jewellery.*] Into the carriage, sir, with your lady.

Madanikā. Mistress dear, what do you mean?

Courtesan. Restraining him with warning words you have now become his lawful wife. Take her, sir. [*Takes hold of Madanikā and pushes her towards him.*]

Sajjalaka. [*Aside.*] Ah, when can I requite her kindness? But may all harm be averted.

The man who looks for recompense does but gain calamity.
May destruction fall on those that hate them, either him or the lady. (7)

¹ *Asambhoga-malīnatayā.*

[*Exit Sajjalaka with Madanikā.*]

Courtesan. Caturikā!

[*Enter Caturikā.*]

Caturikā. Here, my lady.

Courtesan. Look, girl, I was wide awake but had a dream like this.

Caturikā. I am glad. That's just the play they call the Ambrosial Act.

Courtesan. Come, let us take this jewellery to Cārudatta.

Caturikā. As you will, my lady. But that storm is coming up, the escort of trysting ladies.

Courtesan. Little wretch, don't delay me.

Caturikā. Come, dear mistress, come along.

[*Exeunt.*]

END OF ACT IV.

THE FIVE NIGHTS

(*Pañcarātram*)

INTRODUCTION

THE Five Nights takes us into the world of Epic story. This is one of the seven of our plays which are based on the Mahābhārata. These, of course, were written for audiences familiar with the stories of the Great Epic. A reader or an audience without a knowledge of the stories used, and of the main characters figuring in the epic, will not thoroughly appreciate these plays. Nevertheless, there are dramatic scenes which are striking in themselves.

The plot of The Five Nights is based on the Fourth Book of the Mahābhārata called Virāṭa-parvan. In the thirteenth year of their exile the Pāṇḍavas enter the palace of Virāṭa, king of the Matsyas, in various disguises, Yudhisṭhira, the eldest, as a brahman skilled in dice, Bhīmasena as a cook and pugilist, and Arjuna, the great bowman, as an effeminate creature of no sex in particular to teach dancing to the princesses. These are the three sons of Kuntī. The twin sons of Mādri, Nakula (Mongoose), and Sahadeva, also obtained posts to look after the horses and the cows. Draupadī, the wife of the Pāṇḍavas, is employed by the queen as a coiffeuse. (SECTION LII. *Pāṇḍava-praveśa-parvan*.)

Senāpati Kīcaka, one of the *sūtas*,¹ commander-in-chief and a brother of the queen, molests Draupadī. She is protected by an invisible giant. Bhīma avenges the insult by taking Draupadī's place at a pretended rendezvous in the dancing hall, and throttling Kīcaka. He mutilates the corpse and shows it to Draupadī. Her cries attract the guard. Kīcaka's kinsmen want to burn Draupadī with the corpse. The king is afraid of the *sūtas* and agrees. Bhīma plucks up a palmtree and destroys 105 *sūtas*. The remainder take to flight. The citizens are afraid of the supernatural protectors of Draupadī, and the king agrees to deport the coiffeuse, who is allowed to stay another thirteen days. (SECTION LIV. *Kīcaka-vadha-parvan*.)

The Kurus learn of the death of the Kīcakas, and at the suggestion of the king of Trigarta decide to raid the cattle of the Matsyas. The force from Trigarta attacks from the south-east. Virāṭa's cowherd reports the loss of 100,000 cows. The Matsyas arm and attack the

¹ A *sūta* could be groom, equerry, herald, or bard.

raiders. Four Pāṇḍavas go with them. There is a bitter battle which lasts all day and goes on by moonlight. The king of Trigarta captures the king of the Matsyas, but Bhīma rescues him and brings Suśarman, king of Trigarta, in bonds to Yudhishtīra, who grants him his life and lets him go free.

Then the Kurus, attacking from the north, raid the Matsya cattle. The overseer of the herdsmen hurries into the city and, the army being absent, asks Prince Uttara to snatch their booty from the Kurus. The prince says he would go if he had a good charioteer. Bṛihannalā, the effeminate dancing-teacher, really Arjuna in disguise, is recommended and accepted by the prince. Out they drive, but near the cemetery by the *śamī* tree the young prince sights the Kuru host and takes alarm. He jumps out of the chariot and runs away, followed by the dancing-teacher.

The Kurus laugh, but guess that the charioteer is Arjuna. Then Arjuna gives the reins to the prince, undertakes the fighting himself and gets his own weapons from off the *śamī* tree. Arjuna reveals himself to the prince, and arms himself for the battle. There is a long, complicated struggle. Bhishma, the veteran warrior, sends Duryodhana, the eldest of the Kaurava princes, towards Hastināpura¹ with part of the army and the stolen cattle. Arjuna forces the cattle back and performs prodigies of valour. The whole Kuru army is put to flight. Arjuna takes the cattle. The two return to the *śamī* tree and hide the weapons. Arjuna charges Uttara to take the credit of the fighting and not to give him away. The herdsmen are sent on ahead with the same story. King Virāṭa provides his son, Uttara, with a triumphal reception. He plays dice with Kaṅka (Yudhishtīra in disguise), who gives the credit of the victory to Brihannalā, the dancing-teacher, whereupon the king throws the dice in his face and makes his nose bleed. Kṛishṇā catches the blood in a jar. Uttara and Brihannalā are announced, but Yudhishtīra whispers to the doorkeeper to admit only Uttara, so that Arjuna should not see that he had been hurt. Uttara enters and asks his father to conciliate 'Kaṅka'. Then Brihannalā enters and Virāṭa praises Uttara. Uttara tells the true facts about the battle, but substitutes for Arjuna 'a son of the gods' who has disappeared. (SECTION LV. *Goharaṇa-parvan*.)

On the third day after the battle the Pāṇḍavas took their seat on the throne. King Virāṭa was enraged, but Arjuna reveals to him Yudhishtīra and his other brothers. Uttara supports him and relates Arjuna's deeds. Virāṭa makes his peace with the Pāṇḍavas and offers

¹ Fifty-seven miles north-west of Delhi.

his daughter to Arjuna, who asks that she may be wedded to his son Abhimanyu. The Pāṇḍavas settle in Upaplavya, a Matsya town. There they are joined by many kings and Kṛishṇa. Abhimanyu's wedding is celebrated with great pomp. (SECTION LVI. *Vaivāhika-parvan*.)

This Fourth Book contains over two thousand verses. It will be seen how the story is simplified in our drama and details in the epic freely handled.

For any readers not familiar with the Mahābhārata story, it may be well to explain the importance of the thirteenth year. There had been a great gambling match at Hastināpura. The unscrupulous Śakuni, representing Duryodhana the principal Kuru, played with loaded dice against the virtuous Yudhisṭhira, the eldest of the Pāṇḍavas. The Pāṇḍava lost everything; property, money, kingdom, brothers, wife, and finally himself. The victorious Duryodhana insulted Draupadī, the wife of the Pāṇḍavas. Bloodshed was averted by a pact imposed by the elders of the family. For twelve years the Pāṇḍavas were banished to the jungles. During one more year, the thirteenth, they were to live so completely hidden that the Kurus and their spies could not find them—if they succeeded, half the kingdom was to be restored to them—if they failed, they were to be banished for twelve more years.

So they determined to send away their retinue and to take service in a palace, where they were unknown. All went well till the year was nearly over, when the unfortunate infatuation of the commander-in-chief for the little hairdresser led to such violent action on the part of Bhīma, the pugilist in the kitchen. Draupadī wished to stay another fortnight as then the thirteenth year would be over.

The Kurus meanwhile got no news of the Pāṇḍavas but heard of the slaughter of the Kīcakas and thought this an excellent opportunity to raid the Matsyas' cattle.

Thus we have the dramatic situation of the Pāṇḍavas in hiding forced into battle with the Kurus and their allies. We, the audience know who they are, but if they are discovered by the Kurus, or by their spies, among the Matsyas, before the year is out, they are undone and trickery is triumphant for another dozen years. The play begins with a description of the sacrifice performed for the Kuru king given us by three brahmans speaking in turn. Duryodhana is congratulated by all his friends. He is very affable and wishes to give his old preceptor Droṇa a present. He promises to give him anything in his power and swears it over water. Then Droṇa asks, 'Share thine inheritance with the homeless Pāṇḍavas, who for these twelve years have found no

refuge. This is the reward I beg of you'. Śakuni objects. There is an altercation. Duryodhana does not wish to break his solemn promise but is willing to get out of it by any quibble. So he accepts Śakuni's suggestion. If tidings of the Pāṇḍavas are brought to him within *five days*¹ he will present them with half the kingdom. News comes of the slaughter of the Kīcakas. Bhishma recognizes the handiwork of Bhīma, and on his advice Droṇa accepts the condition of the five days. Bhishma professes a private feud with Virāṭa and proposes a cattle raid. They all agree. (ACT I.)

In the next act the interlude shows us the herds of Virāṭa being raided by the Kurus. News is brought to the king, who wishes to go and fight. He sends 'Bhagavān' the brahman, called Kaṅka in the epic, who is really Yudhisṭhira in disguise. Then he sends for his chariot, to learn Prince Uttara has already taken it. The story of the defeat of the Kurus by the young prince and his strange charioteer is brought in by messengers. Arjuna, disguised as Bṛīhannalā, is brought in to give further details of battle. Then we learn that Abhimanyu, Arjuna's son, who was with the Kurus, has been captured by the scullion (really Bhīma). Bṛīhannalā is sent to bring him in. Abhimanyu does not recognize his father or his uncles. Then Uttara reveals who they are. Virāṭa offers his daughter, and Arjuna accepts her for his son. (ACT II.)

The Kurus learn that Abhimanyu has been captured. Bhishma guesses it was Bhīma who captured him, and then they suspect the work of Arjuna in the archery ascribed to Uttara. While they are discussing this, an arrow is brought in marked with Arjuna's name.

Uttara brings a message from Yudhisṭhira inviting all the Kurus to the wedding of Uttara and Abhimanyu. Droṇa claims the fulfilment of the promise as the five days have not ended. Duryodhana agrees, and Droṇa expresses his delight. 'Oh joy! Now we are all content in the union of the mighty houses. May our Lion-King rule over all this earth.'

This verse ends the play and serves as the Bharata-vākyaṃ, epilogue or final benediction. (ACT III.)

It will be obvious that our dramatist has taken enormous liberties with the epic story. Indeed, by working in a happy ending at this point he has excluded every reason for the great battle which is the central point of the Mahābhārata. In his treatment of the Virāṭa-

¹ Hence the name of the play Five Nights, i. e. five days. Compare 'fortnight' for fourteen-night = fourteen days and the

obsolete 'sennight' for seven-night = a week.

parvan itself he has omitted a great deal, modified several particulars, and invented much of his own. Only three of the Pāṇḍavas are mentioned, nothing is said of Nakula and Sahadeva. The slaughter of the Kīcakas is not explained. Duryodhana's sacrifice is invented, so is the capture of Abhimanyu. Trigarta's attack is suppressed so that the original reason for Uttara's action is removed. The old King Virāṭa may be slow to act, but there is really no time for Uttara to have found his charioteer. Nor was there any reason for it. It has to be explained as a joke. Regarded as a story, the version in this play is far inferior to that of the epic. It may be noted that all the rougher aspects of the old story have been smoothed away—e. g. Kīcaka's brutality to Draupadi and Yudhishṭhira's bleeding nose. Moreover, Duryodhana is represented in a more favourable light. Śakuni is the only villain and has replaced Karna of the original. Karna in the play is generous and inclined to peace, in the epic he is haughty, insolent, jealous of the Pāṇḍavas, and particularly hostile to Arjuna.

It has sometimes been said that Bhāsa is closer to the epic feeling than later poets. This play lends no support to that view. The characters of the epic story are treated here with a respect and delicacy that are no signs of antiquity. The atmosphere is one of piety and polite courtesy. The merit of the play lies in its skill in telling of a battle indirectly and in the enjoyment of the audience who can see through the disguises. The situation in which the young Abhimanyu cannot recognize his father and uncle, who taunt him, must have been specially pleasing to the poet who invented it, and to his audience.

The last verse suggests that the play may have been written for some special occasion on the ending of a feud in some royal family, but as to this, of course, we are completely in the dark.

DRAMATIS PERSONAE

(In order of appearance.)

Stage-manager, in Prologue only.

Three Brahmins, in Prelude of Act I.

Bhishma, son of Śāmtanu, old warrior who guides the Kurus.

DROṆA, the old preceptor of the Kuru and of the Pāṇḍava princes.

DURYODHANA, eldest of the Kuru princes, sons of Dhṛitarāshṭra.

Karna, King of Anṅa, elder half-brother of the Pāṇḍavas, being a son of Kuntī.

Śakuni, brother of Queen Gāndhārī, maternal uncle of the Kuru princes, Prince of Gāndhāra.

Servant of the Kurus.

Messenger.

King Bhūriśravas of the Deccan, King Bhishmaḅa, King Vasubhadra, and Sahadeva son of Jarāsandha do not speak. (Nor does Abhimanyu in Act I.)

Old Cowherd.

Gomitṛaka, younger cowherd.

Other Cowherds.

Soldier, Jayasena.

Chamberlain of Virāṭa's palace.

King Virāṭa (of the Matsyas).

Servant of Virāṭa.

BHAGAVĀN, Yudhisṭhira (epic Kaṅka, a dicer).

Attendant of Virāṭa.

Charioteer of Virāṭa.

BṚHANNALĀ, Arjuna, the great archer.

BHĪMA or BHĪMASENA, the powerful Pāṇḍu, disguised as a scullion pugilist. (Epic Ballava.)

Abhimanyu, Arjuna's son.

Uttara, Virāṭa's son.

Charioteer of the Kurus.

The rather intricate relationships of the Pāṇdavas and Kauravas are not essential to the story of the play, but the following table may be of use in indicating to which generation each of them belongs.

14th from Kuru : Śāntanu m.	} — Vicitravīrya m. Ambika and Ambalika but no issue	
(1) Satyawatī	— BHĪSHMA	
(2) Gaṅgā	} — VYĀSA	
Parāśara with	} (1) Ambika — DṚṢṬARĀSHṬRA } Duryodhina	
Satyawatī	} half-brother's blind m. + 99 brothers	
	} widow	
	} Gandhārī, sister of Śakuni	
(2) Ambalika — PĀṇḍu	} Yudhiṣṭhira	
half-brother's m.	} Bhīma	
widow	} (1) Kuntī, a Yādava	
	} (mother of Karna) Arjuna m.	
	} Subhadra	
	} Nakula	
	} Sahadeva	
	} Abhimanyu m.	
	} Uttarā d. of Virāṭa	
(2) Mādrī		
(3) Slave girl — Vidura		
the Wise		

PROLOGUE

[*At the end of the Opening*¹ *enter the Stage-manager.*]

Stage-manager. May the Resplendent One² protect you, that cloud harbinger upon the earth of the bright and terrible. Pilot of the lord of birds,³ he is hard to combat, grimly steadfast in battle, but takes the higher path intent on sacrifice. (1)

[*By paronomasia this verse introduces the names of Droṇa, Arjuna, Bhīma, Karṇa, Śakuni, Duryodhana, Bhīshma, Yudhishtira, Uttara, and Abhimanyu.*]

[*Turning round.*] With these words, my lords and gentlemen, I have to announce to you— But what is that? I thought I heard a noise, just as I was to make my announcement. Well, I must see what it is.

[*Voice behind the scene.*]

Ah, how magnificent is the sacrifice of the Kurus' king!

Stage-manager. So be it; I understand.

Duryodhana, the Kurus' king, performs a sacrifice, attended through affection by the vassal kings with all their courts. (2)

[*Exit.*]

END OF PROLOGUE.

ACT I

PRELUDE

[*Enter three Brahmins.*]

All together. Ah, how magnificent is the sacrifice of the Kurus' king!

First Brahman. All the land seems flowering with Kāsa from the fragments of the feasting of the priests. All these lines of trees lose the fragrance of their blossom in the oblation fumes. Tigers are as tame as deer, and the lions in the hills too quiet to attack.⁴ By the consecration of the king for the rite, the whole world, it seems, is consecrated. (3)

¹ Nāndī, see note, p. ix.

³ Garuḍa.

² Virāj identified with Puruṣa, Prajāpati, &c., and later with Viṣṇu: here with Kṛiṣṇa.

⁴ Comm. suggests also, 'not retaliating when beaten'.

Second Brahman. 'Tis true,

Fire at the head¹ of the greater deities is satisfied with oblations, the chief of the twice-born content with treasures. Full-fed are the flocks of birds and herds of kine, all men in the world are content. At present this world is altogether full of joy, eloquent of the king's good qualities. So by his virtues all the universe has become an abode for the gods. (4)

Third Brahman. Here are noble brahmins,

Honoured for their lore profound, their feet are chafed by the diadems² of kings. Even in old age they continue austerities with faces brave from study. Priests that are feeble with advance of age lay crooked hands on their pupils' shoulders and so advance with a staff like aged elephants, on three legs. (5)

Together. Ho there, you acolytes, acolytes! The ritual lustration is not complete, you must not let the fire go free.

First Brahman. Alas, you see how careless the lads are.

The ground is bright with its sacrificial post illumined as with an arm of gold. The sacred fire suffers not the common fire beside it as a twice-born man shrinks from a churl. The surface of the altar is but slightly scorched in its circle of green *kuśa* grass. The smoke is making for the east bamboos³ like an elephant for a lotus plant in blossom. (6)

Second Brahman. 'Tis even so,

The priests remove the holy fire fearful of the common flame, like a kinsman kept from contact with his kin in a house that has transgressed the moral law. (7)

Third Brahman. Look you on the other side,

The barrow full of butter is ablaze though sprinkled with water, as a woman bereft of her child, though drenched in tears, burns with the love of her babe.⁴ (8)

First Brahman. 'Tis true,

Leaping up where the *kuśa* grass is dry to burn the emperor's sacrificial cart, the fire is gradually dwarfed where the grass is dark and green. Now blown about by the breeze it flames around and in its course it gains the wheel, and forming a circle round the rim mimics the sun. (9)

Second Brahman. Look you, here is another thing.

¹ Comm. 'the mouth'.

² Or 'silk of the turbans'.

³ Front portion of the sacrificial shed.

⁴ A tasteless play on words. The woman sizzles through her tears like the sacrificial cart full of clarified butter.

Five snakes at once, frightened by the fire, are issuing from holes at an ant-hill's base, like the five senses at once from the body of one that has just died. (10)

Third Brahman. Again look you,

Birds that nested in the hollows of that tree now burning with the sacrificial fire in the wind have flown out like the breath of life. (11)

First Brahman. 'Tis even so,

The forest with its flowering trees is destroyed through one dry trunk, as a family through one wicked member. (12)

Second Brahman. These bamboos moving in the wind as they are burned by the sacred fire rise and fall like the fortunes of mortal men. (13)

Third Brahman. Well said.

The tree is entangled in the dry creeper clinging to its trunk, as a good man is destroyed by a woman's fault. (14)

First Brahman. Look you again,

After feasting on this forest, to its heart's content, on trees and shrubs and bushes, the fire has run along the *kuśa* grass down to the stream to rinse its lips and fingers. (15)

Second Brahman. The very same

Fire with its flying robe of grass goes from tree to tree, and the scorched plantains fall as if they were over-ripe. That palm tree in front with its great ring of honeyed hives, burnt for a long time at its root, falls like Kudra's axe. (16)

Third Brahman. Ah, now the holy fire dies down like a good man's anger.

The force of the fire is ended from the lack of fuel like the munificence of a noble man when his wealth is exhausted. (17)

First Brahman. The flames are licking the ritual ladle, the bowls, the firesticks, and grass as a man brought low by vice drinks up his own clothing. (18)

Second Brahman. This Flame of the Forest with boughs overhanging the stream dips one leafy hand in the breeze to make the last libation for the trees that lost their lives in the forest fire. (19)

Third Brahman. Come then, let us also perform the proper ablutions.

The other two. 'Tis well.

[*They all dip their hands in the water.*]

First Brahman. Ah, hither comes this very way his Majesty,¹ Duryodhana, the Kuru king, preceded by Bhīshma and Droṇa and followed by a galaxy of all the kings. And here

The citizens with sweet speech and opportune, to wit—

‘Feed with sacrifices, and win the earth with valour. Lay wrath aside and be merciful to thy own people’, do homage—really to the sons of Pāṇḍu. (20)

Come then, we too will wait on the Kuru king.

The other two. Very good.

All together. Victory to the king!

[*Exeunt omnes.*]

END OF THE PRELUDE.

[*Enter Bhīshma and Droṇa.*]

Droṇa. My thanks at least are due to Duryodhana for upholding the law. For

A pupil’s fault comes home to the teacher, passing by kin and ignoring friends; for no blame lies with father or mother if they hand over the child to a preceptor at an early age. (21)

Bhīshma. Here is Duryodhana,

Reaching his eminence by winning wealth he has drained the dregs of infamy through his love of strife. Now at long last, honouring the sacred law, a vessel of good works, this very man shines in a new guise. (22)

[*Enter Duryodhana, Karṇa, and Śakuni.*]

Duryodhana. My mind is confident, my preceptor fully satisfied.

The world is reassured. My virtue is established and infamy departed. Only the dead, they say, can gain heaven, but that is false; heaven is not invisible, but bears its manifold fruit here in this world of ours. (23)

Karṇa. Son of Gāndhārī! your action was but just to lavish wealth justly acquired. For

The prosperity of warriors depends on their arrows. Who hoards for his sons is deceived. Pouring his treasure into the laps of the priests, a king should give his sons for all their patrimony nothing but a bow. (24)

Śakuni. The Aṅga king speaks truly, purified of guilt by ablutions in the Ganges.

¹ Reading *atrabharān*.

Ikshvāku and other ancient heroes¹ possessed great treasures and mighty kingdoms. Their bodies have perished, but by their sacrifices they survive. (25)

All together. Gāndhāri's son! Congratulations on the successful termination of the sacrifice.

Duryodhana. I thank you. My teacher, I salute you.

Droṇa. Come, come, my son, this is not the proper order.

Duryodhana. What is the order, then?

Droṇa. Do you not see?

This man that is a god in human form, should receive the first obeisance. I cannot approve your salutation if Bhīshma is passed over. (26)

Bhīshma. No, say not so. In many ways am I inferior to you.

I was born from a mother, thou from thyself alone. My livelihood depends on arms, thine on their denial. Thou art a brahman, we are born of a warrior's house. Thou art the preceptor, and we thy pupils' pupils. (27)

Droṇa. Great-souled men cannot praise themselves. Come then, my son, salute me.

Duryodhana. Preceptor, I salute you.

Droṇa. Come hither, my son. May you attain fatigue in such ritual ablutions.

Duryodhana. I thank you. Grandfather, I salute you.

Bhīshma. Come to me, my grandson, may your spirit ever be as tranquil.

Duryodhana. I thank you. Uncle, I salute you.

Śakuni. My child.

Having thus completed all the rites with guerdons to the priests and having subdued all the kings, mayest thou assemble them like Jarāsandha in a coronation ceremony. (28)

Droṇa. Ah! Even while pronouncing a benediction Śakuni excites his ambition. Alas! This young warrior prince is fond of strife.

Duryodhana. Karna, my friend, having saluted all my elders in due order, I may now enjoy your friendly confidence.

Karna. Gāndhāri's son!

Ritual vows have made thy body thin, yet thou canst endure my violence, let me embrace thee tightly. Till I have made my loving greeting, I will not trouble thee within, but I am scared of this solemn title 'Royal Sage'.² (29)

¹ Lit. Ikshvāku, Śayyāti, Yayāti, Rāma, Mādhātṛi, Nābhāga, Nṛiga, and Ambarīsha.

² Newly gained by the king on account of his sumptuous sacrifice.

Duryodhana. I hope you will always feel the same.

Droṇa. Duryodhana, my son, this is King Bhismaka, a favourite of mighty Indra, come to honour you.

Duryodhana. Welcome, noble prince. I salute you.

Bhishma. Grandson, this is King Bhūriśravas, the iron bolt of the Deccan's gateway. He desires to offer his congratulations.

Duryodhana. Welcome, noble prince.

Droṇa. King Vasubhadra, wishing to honour your sacrifice, has sent Abhimanyu with his felicitations.

Śakuni. Duryodhana, my child, here is Sahadeva, the son of Jarā-sandha, to salute you.

Duryodhana. Come hither, boy. May you grow up a hero like your father.

All together. This gathering of all the kings congratulates you.

Duryodhana. I thank you all. But if all the kings have gathered here, why has Virāṭa not appeared?

Śakuni. I have sent a messenger. I think he is on the way.

Duryodhana. Now, my preceptor, my teacher of the sacred lore as well as of the bow, be pleased to accept a teacher's fee.

Droṇa. A fee? Well, be it so. There is something for which I will petition.

Duryodhana. How, shall a teacher make petition?

Bhishma. Why, what do you need?

When he has quaffed the *soma* in his youth, when he is attended by an umbrella of state, and attains renown, what wealth remains, what reward, what special thing, wherein a brahman, teacher of warriors, can be poor? (30)

Duryodhana. Command me, what do you desire? What can I do for you?

Droṇa. My son, Duryodhana, I will tell you.

Duryodhana. Why now do you hesitate?

Dearer to thee than life, I have gained from thee my training. My valour is established and I rank with heroes. Speak out freely, what thou wouldst have. What can I give?

While the mace rests in my hand, all is thine. (31)

Droṇa. My son, I will tell you, but the torrent of my tears impedes me.

All together. What! Is the preceptor shedding tears?

Bhishma. Duryodhana, my grandson, you have had all your trouble in vain.

Duryodhana. Ho, without there!

[*Enter Servant.*]

Servant. To the great king, victory.

Duryodhana. Bring me water.

Servant. As the great king commands. [*Exit and re-enters.*]

Victory to the great king! Here is water.

Duryodhana. Bring it here. [*Takes the bowl.*] My teacher, pritheh cleanse thy cheeks stained by falling tears.

Droṇa. Very well. But the cleansing stream shall be the fulfilment of my heart's desire.

Duryodhana. Alack!

If thou thinkest of my erstwhile duplicity and doubtest of my giving, stretch out thy hand, hardened with hundreds of arrows. Lo, this water is a guarantor of gifts. (32)

Droṇa. Ah, now my heart is confident. Hearken, my son.

Share thine inheritance with the homeless Pāṇḍavas, who for these twelve years have found no refuge. This is the reward I beg of you. (33)

Śakuni. [*Excitedly.*] Nay, not so.

Is it worthy of thee, this religious fraud, broaching thyself the question of the sacrifice to cozen thy pupil initiated by thyself and trusting thee as his teacher? (34)

Droṇa. Religious fraud? Speak not thus, Śakuni, with the arrogance of Gandhāra. Dishonourable yourself, you think every one else is the same.

Is it fraud if I bid him to restore his cousins their sire's domain? Is it better to give what is asked, or for them to take it by force? (35)

All. What? By force?

Bhīshma. Grandson! At the moment we are concerned only with the final purification. Do not listen to Śakuni, who is an enemy in the guise of a friend. Look you, my child,

If Pāṇḍu's sons with the daughter of King Drupada roam over the earth dishevelled with desert dust, if thou art averse from them and they adverse to thee, all this comes from the harsh conceit of Śakuni. (36)

Duryodhana. It may be so, but one question I will put to you, my teacher.

Droṇa. Speak out, my son.

Duryodhana. At first, when in the gambling hall in the open court they were stripped of realm and pride, why did they restrain their wrath if they were capable of force? (37)

Droṇa. That you should ask Yudhishtira, who with his devotion to the dice was cheated by a pretence of fair play.

'Twas he checked Bhīma just as he was measuring the pillars of the halls. Had he been allowed one movement, Śakuni would not chide us now. (38)

Bhishma. One thing is proposed, another comes about. Good preceptor, the important thing is our purpose, not the quarrel.

Droṇa. No cringing, let us rather have the quarrel.

Bhishma. Be calm, preceptor! Look you, my grandson,

They are powerless, miserable, and destitute. Humbly they seek conciliation with thee. Thou art the eldest and thou hast their affection. Wilt thou sustain them in thy household, or shall they remain with beasts? (39)

Śakuni. Let them remain, let them remain.

Karna. Good, my teacher, be not impatient. Duryodhana in sooth, Is wroth when given bitter counsel, however wise, nor can he brook the praising of the pre-eminence of better men. Have a care now of your pupil's performance almost come to completion. He should be guided gently like an elephant with many faults. (40)

Droṇa. Karna, my child, glorious is the dignity of a brahman.¹ You have reminded me in time. Lo, I will follow your suggestion. Duryodhana, my son, am I your teacher?

Bhishma. Now he has started on the right track. Conciliation is the only remedy for the ill-behaved.

Duryodhana. Not only my teacher, but the lord of all my house.

Droṇa. That is worthy of you. So, my son,

If thou art deceived by me that is no fault of thine; or if I trouble thee, be that for thy gain. Mutual dissensions in great houses are reconciled by the weighty words of law. (41)

Duryodhana. And so I wish to take counsel.

Droṇa. With whom will you take counsel, my son?

With Bhishma or with Karna? With what king?² With Jayadratha the ruler of Sindh? Or perhaps with Droṇa's son, with Vidura, with thy father or thy mother? Speak, my son, with whom? (42)

Duryodhana. No, no, with my uncle.

Droṇa. With Śakuni? Alas, our task is hopeless.

Duryodhana. Come hither, uncle, and you too, dear Karna.

¹ Or, brahmanhood is passionate. Comm.

² Reading *नृपेण*.

Droṇa. [*Aside.*] So be it. I know what I will do. [*Aloud.*] Come along, my child, king of Gāndhāra.

Śakuni. Here I am.

Droṇa. My child,

Old age is prone to anger, forgive my childish indiscretion.

Let my embrace be peacemaker for my sharp words. (43)

Bhīshma. [*Aside.*] Here is the preceptor, through affection for his pupil, beseeching Śakuni, and he, though he be conciliated, does not forego his crookedness. (44)

Śakuni. [*Aside.*] Ha, ha, the teacher is a rogue, he is coaxing me to get his own way.

[*All step round and sit down.*]

Duryodhana. Uncle, what is your opinion about giving half the kingdom to the Pāṇḍavas?

Śakuni. It should not be given—that is my opinion.

Duryodhana. Yet my mother's brother might well say it should be given.

Śakuni. If the realm is to be given,¹ why do you ask our advice? Go on, give it all away.

Duryodhana. You say nothing, my dear king of the Aṅgas.

Karṇa. Now what shall I say?

The brotherly goodness that Rāma has enjoyed and himself maintained I would not oppose. Pardon or no pardon, that is for thee to decide. We assist thee in times of battle. (45)

Duryodhana. My uncle, think of some wretched country hard to live in and beset by a powerful foe, where the Pāṇḍavas might dwell.

Śakuni. Nay, beware.

My answer is, the empty air. What foe more powerful than Arjuna? Yet corn will grow in salty soil if Yudhisṭhira be king. (46)

Duryodhana. But now,

I have poured the water in the hollow of my teacher's palm, as the elders of the house heard me declare what is binding on this earth.

Impolitic it may be, or deception, anything you like, O king, but I intend to make that promise² true. (47)

Śakuni. So you wish to avoid breaking your word?

Duryodhana. Why, yes.

Śakuni. Then come this way a moment. [*Going up to Droṇa.*] Good teacher, his Majesty the king of the Kurus gives you this answer.

Droṇa. My dear Prince of Gāndhāra, pray tell me.

¹ *Yadā* with loc. absol.

² Lit. 'water'.

Śakuni. If tidings of the Pāṇḍavas are brought ¹ to him within five days, he will present them with half his kingdom. So now you may bring them home.

Droṇa. Nay, say not so.

Intent on trickery you would have me bring them in five days, though none has seen them for twelve years. In plain words the boon is not granted. (48)

Bhīshma. Grandson, no tricks in duty! In this matter I also approve. Look you, my boy,

Do thou share with the Pāṇḍavas, be it in one year or a hundred. Make thy promise true, my hero, for the Kurus ever keep their word. (49)

Duryodhana. That is my decision.

Droṇa. [*Aside.*] Eagerness for my purpose makes me wish to-day that I resembled Hanumān, who leapt across the flood and brought back news of the vanished Sītā. (50)

Now whence in the world can I bring tidings of the Pāṇḍavas?

[*Enter a Servant.*]

Servant. To the great king, victory! The messenger has returned from Virāṭa city.

All. Bring him in at once.

Servant. As you command.

[*Exit.*] [*Enter the Messenger.*]

Messenger. To the great king, greeting!

All. Has the lord of Virāṭa arrived?

Messenger. He is in mourning and cannot come.

All. Why is he in mourning?

Messenger. Let his Majesty hear. Closely related to him were the hundred brothers of the Bamboo clan,² and,

One night they were slain by one unknown with his naked hands, for all the corpses seem to have been slaughtered without a weapon. (51)

All. What? Slaughtered without a weapon?

Bhīshma. Without a weapon? [*Aside to Droṇa.*] Good teacher, agree to the five days.

Droṇa. [*Aside to Bhīshma.*] Why?

Bhīshma. [*Aside.*] It is quite evident this was the sport of Bhīma with the mighty arms. His wrath against a hundred brothers here has borne fruit in another hundred. (52)

Droṇa. How do you know?

¹ *Yad* with future participle.

² *Kicaka*.

Bhīshma. How, Paṇḍit? If calves wander on the river banks, frisking as young things do, will the old bulls fail to recognize the marks of their horns? (53)

Droṇa. 'Old bulls' you say? Good, the thing is done. [*Aloud.*] Duryodhana, my son, I agree to the five days.

Duryodhana. Very well. Five days let it be.

Droṇa. Hearken, all you kings here present to attend this sacrifice. His Majesty the king of the Kurus, Duryodhana—nay, not he, but he together with his uncle on his mother's side, will surely present the Pāṇḍavas with half the kingdom if news of them is brought within five days. Is it not so, my son?

Duryodhana. Exactly.

Droṇa. Reflect on that a second time and a third.

Śakuni. I shall know when the time is over.

Droṇa. What say you, Bhīshma?¹

Bhīshma. [*Aside.*] If the preceptor's joy outstep his self-control and becomes too plain, I fear he may be cheated by Duryodhana, who is now deceived. (54)

[*Aloud.*] Duryodhana, my grandson, I have a secret feud with Virāṭa. That is why he did not attend your sacrifice. So let us raid his cattle.

Droṇa. [*Aside to Bhīshma.*] Oh, Bhīshma! His Highness the Lord of the Virāṭas is a dear pupil of mine. Why would you raid his cattle?

Bhīshma. [*Aside to Droṇa.*] Honest-hearted brahman!

Deafened by the din of chariots the Pāṇḍavas will be enraged. They are possessed of gratitude, so our success lies in the cattle-raid. (55)

[*Enter Servant.*]

Servant. To the great king, victory! The chariots are ready for the state entry into the city.

Duryodhana. With the selfsame chariots let us at once go lift his kine. The mace that was at rest throughout the sacrifice shall come to my hand again. (56)

Droṇa. So let my people bring my car.

Śakuni. Bring my elephant.

Karṇa. Hither bring my chariot yoked with steeds full eager for their burden.

Bhīshma. My heart hastens to go to the Virāṭa's city, hasten hither with my bow.

¹ Lit. Son of the Ganges.

All. Let the bow be and do thou stay here. We will do thy bidding.

Droṇa. Duryodhana, my son, we two old men desire to see your valour in the battle.

Duryodhana. As you please.

Droṇa. Dear Lord of Gāndhāra, in this raid do you go in the leading chariot.

Śakuni. Good! An excellent suggestion.

[*Exeunt omnes.*]

END OF THE FIRST ACT.

ACT II

[*The scene is laid in the Virāṭa country.*]

INTERLUDE

[*Enter an old Cowherd.*]

Old Cowherd. May my kine never lack for calves. May our young women never be widows. May our King Virāṭa be the lord of all the earth under one umbrella. The great King Virāṭa is going to give away cows at his birthday festival, that is why the herd was to come into this paddock outside the city, with all the cowherd lads and lasses in holiday attire and merry mood. I will find the eldest among them and see about it.¹ [*Looking round.*] Now why is that crow perched on that dead tree, rubbing his beak on a withered branch and croaking hoarsely, with his face to the sun? Peace be on us, and peace be on the herd. I will just find the leader and call out the lads and lasses. [*Steps around.*] Hello, Gomitraka, Gomitraka!

[*Enter Gomitraka.*]

Gomitraka. Good day to you, grandpa!²

Old Cowherd. Peace be on us, and peace be on the herd. Gomitraka, the great King Virāṭa is going to give away cows at his birthday festival, that's why the herd was to come into this paddock outside the city, and all the lads and lasses in holiday attire and merry mood. Call them out, Gomitraka.

Gomitraka. As you will, grandpa. Ho, Gorakshīṇikā! Ghṛitapiṇḍa,

¹ Comm. takes *dāva* with preceding sentence and renders *jjeṣṭham* by *jjaṇṭhyam* = having attained seniority, leadership among them. L. S. 'I shall go and honour

the best among them.'

² Lit. 'uncle', i. e. mother's brother; affectionate term for old man.

Svāmini, Vṛishabhadatta, Kumbhadatta, Mahishadatta, come here at once.¹

[*They all enter.*]

All together. Good day to you, grandpa!

Old Cowherd. Peace be on us, and peace be on the herd, and the lads and lasses too. The great King Virāṭa is going to give away cows at his birthday festival, that's why the herd was to come into this paddock outside the city. Meantime let us be singing and dancing.

All together. As grandpa bids. [*They all dance.*]

Old Cowherd. Hee, hee! Well danced, well sung! Now I am going to dance. [*Dances.*]

All. Oh, grandpa, you've raised a mighty dust.

Old Cowherd. Not only dust, but a din of conches and drums.

All. Oh, grandpa, the sun is nearly gone, with its circle veiled in dust pale as the light of the morning moon.

Gomitṛaka. Look, grandpa, these people on horse-carts, with umbrellas as white as lumps of curd, are driving all through the camp, the thieves.

Old Cowherd. Oho, a flight of arrows! Lads and lasses, quick, into the huts.

All. Right you are, grandpa. [*Exeunt.*]

Old Cowherd. Ha! stop them, strike away, seize them, seize them! We will report this matter to the great King Virāṭa.

[*Exit.*]

END OF THE INTERLUDE.

[*Enter a Soldier.*]

Soldier. Ho there! take word, take word to the great king, Lord of Virāṭa—for those cows are being lifted by the sons of Dhṛitarāshṭra, concealing their valour with the works of rogues.

This herd is pitiable in its agitation, with scampering calves and lines of frightened cows, while the bulls' faces show terror of what they see. All around the air is rent with bellows of distress. (1)

[*Behind the scenes.*]

By the sons of Dhṛitarāshṭra?

Soldier. Yes, sir.

[*Enter Chamberlain.*]

Chamberlain. It is likely enough of men malicious to their brothers. For,

¹ Names suggesting the herdsman's life: 'Cow-keeper, Butterball, &c.'

Clad in mail, with arrow-guards bound on arm and hand, they ride, elate with valour, on well-furnished chariots, with long-bows strung and weapons drawn, and their feud with the king they avenge on cows. (2)

Jayasena! His Majesty is intent on his birthday ceremonies, so your announcement would be most untimely. It would make him very angry. So I will tell him at the end of this auspicious day.

Soldier. But, Sir, this matter is very urgent. Do inform him at once.

Chamberlain. Well, it shall be done.

[*Exeunt.*]

[*Enter the King.*]

King. Out upon it! My cows are being stolen, with their calves rushing round in alarm through dread of the chariots' roar. And all the while my own right arm,¹ with its massive shoulder, is jingling with bracelets and wet with sandal paste, shamelessly feasting on dainties. (3)

Jayasena! Jayasena!

[*Enter a Soldier.*]

Soldier. Victory to the great king!

King. Oh, drop your 'great king'. My knighthood is in the mud. Tell me the details of the battle.

Soldier. Great king! Unpleasant news is not worth telling in detail. This is the gist of it.

The limbs of the kine made all one hue by the chariot's dust are lined in black and blue by the blows of the lash.² (4)

King. Then,

Swiftly bring my bow and make my chariot ready. Who loves me may follow of his own free will. A struggle for the cattle in the van of the fight cannot be futile. Though death ensue, there will be glory, and if we release them the law is upheld. (5)

Soldier. As your Majesty commands. [*Exit.*]

King. Now why, I wonder, does Duryodhana show this hostility to me? Because I did not go to his sacrifice? How could I attend? The destruction of the Bamboo brethren involved us in exceeding grief. Or perhaps it is because I secretly favour the Pāṇḍavas. In any case, I must fight. Now Bhagavān knows Duryodhana's character, for he lived a long while in Hastināpura. Though

¹ Lit. 'hand'.

² Lit. 'the distinctions of various colours appear in the blows of the lash.'

Willingly he will not tell me Duryodhana's faults, yet when need be, a man with a purpose asks and asks without tiring. (6)
Ho, without there!

[*Enter a Servant.*]

Servant. To the great king, victory!

King. Just call Bhagavān, will you?

Servant. As Your Majesty commands. [*Exit.*]

[*Enter Bhagavān.*]

Bhagavān. [*Looking all round.*] Ah! what is this?

Mighty elephants are being harnessed. The captains of the horse are clad in mail. Chariots are yoked, and soldiers tighten up their belts. Seeing all this preparation I feel unwonted apprehension. I am resolute, but my brothers are more changeable. (7)

[*Approaching.*] Greeting to you, sir.

King. Bhagavān, Virāṭa salutes you.

Bhagavān. Bless you.

King. I thank you, Bhagavān. Here is a seat. Pray sit down.

Bhagavān. Thanks. [*Sits down.*] O king,

Why is this activity toward? Is your Majesty unsatisfied?

Is it to subdue the arrogant, or to rescue the oppressed? (8)

King. Bhagavān, I have been insulted by the lifting of my cattle.

Bhagavān. By whom?¹

King. By the sons of Dhṛitarāshṭra.

Bhagavān. By the sons of Dhṛitarāshṭra? [*Aside.*] Alas, it is unfortunate.

In this world community of descent moves the hearts of the wise, for when my quarrelsome kin do wrong, in truth it seems as though I had done wrong myself. (9)

King. Bhagavān! On what now are you pondering?

Bhagavān. Nay, nothing. I am sorry for them.

King. From this day on they will be humble. Though Yudhisṭhira can forgive them, I shall not.

Bhagavān. Quite so. [*Aside.*]

Now is all commendable, a couch of leaves upon the ground, the loss of my realm, Draupadī put to shame and living in disguises—for my clemency is recognized. (10)

[*Enter an Attendant.*]

Attendant. To the great king, victory!

King. What is Duryodhana doing now?

¹ Reading *Kena* for *Kena karaṇena*, why?

Attendant. Not only Duryodhana, but the kings of the earth, have come, all of them.

Droṇa, Bhīṣma, Jayadratha, Śalya, and the Aṅga king, with Śakuni and Kripa. No need of arrows, we are beaten by their very standards with streamers oscillating with the jolting of their cars. (11)

King. [*Rising and folding his hands.*] What? Has the royal Bhīṣma also come?

Bhagavān. [*Aside.*] Good. Although insulted he does not transgress the rules of etiquette. Ha!

Why now has the noblest elder of the Kurus come? I suspect he would remind me that our promise is fulfilled. (12)

King. Ho, without there!

[*Enter a Servant.*]

Servant. To the great king, victory!

King. Call my charioteer.

Servant. As the great king commands. [*Exit.*]

[*Enter the Charioteer.*]

Charioteer. Long live the king!

King. Swiftly bring my chariot, a noble battle-guest has come. Bhīṣma shall have all the arrows he desires; to defeat him is beyond my hopes. (13)

Charioteer. As the king commands. Long live Your Majesty!
The chariot which thou art wont to use to break the foeman's ranks, Prince Uttara has taken it to manifest his skill with a car. (14)

King. What! has the prince gone out?

Bhagavān. O king, keep back the prince, call him back.

His youth makes him keen on the battle, recking nought of good or bad. There is no fire of battle that does not burn when one is close. It is from no disrespect I tell thee the dangers of battle. (15)

King. Then get another chariot ready at once.

Charioteer. As the king commands.

King. Nay, come here a moment.

Charioteer. Your Majesty, I am here.

King. Now how comes it thou didst not drive the prince's car?

Did he dismiss thee? Art thou not the royal charioteer? (16)

Charioteer. Be not wroth, Your Majesty. I prepared the car and was in attendance according to my duty of charioteer. But the prince,

Be it for a jest or on account of skill in driving, passed me by and appointed as his driver—the girlish Bṛhannalā.¹ (17)

King. What! Bṛhannalā?

Bhagavān. O king, be not alarmed.

If Bṛhannalā has gone with him mounting the car, overcast by the dust which its own wheel raises, that car will be victorious without the aid of arrows, instantly vanquishing the foes by the roaring of its fellies. (18)

King. Then quickly get ready another chariot.

Charioteer. As your Majesty commands. [*Exit.*]

[*Enter a Soldier.*]

Soldier. The prince's chariot is smashed!

King. What! Smashed, do you say?

Bhagavān. How now, smashed?

Soldier. Will the great king deign to hear?

Numerous foes, expert in war, cut off the horses' path, and the car, making for a thicket, was shattered in front of the burial ground. (19)

Bhagavān. [*Aside.*] Ah, that's where we hid Arjuna's bow.²

[*Aloud.*] O king,

There is some reason for that, the car before the burial ground. The ground whereon the sons of Dhṛitarāshṭra stand will soon become a cemetery. (20)

King. Bhagavān, your cool talk out of season makes me angry.

Bhagavān. Do not be angry. I have never told you what was false.

King. Yes, that is so. [*To Soldier.*] Go and bring more news.

Soldier. As the great king commands. [*Exit.*]

King. What is this thundering noise, started all of a sudden, that seems to shake the earth, like the curving flood of a river? (21)

Find out what it is.

[*Enter the Soldier.*]

Soldier. To the great king, victory! From the burial ground, after breathing his horses a while, the prince——

Bhagavān. May he not make my words untrue.

King. What did the prince do?

Soldier. He made the dark-blue elephants tawny by shooting arrows by the hundred. There is not a steed or warrior but his body bears a hundred arrows. The best chariots are clogged

¹ Masculine or feminine. 'A Lofty as a hermaphrodite.
Reed', a name adopted by Arjuna disguised ² Gāṇḍīva, the bow of Arjuna.

with arrows, and with arrows pinned around. The roads are hidden by showers of arrows, and the bow pours forth a gruesome stream of darts. (22)

Bhagavān. [*Aside.*] That is the work of the quiver inexhaustible, whereby in the Khāṇḍava wood shafts were sped as numerous as Indra's drops of rain. (23)

King. Then what is the state of the enemy now?

Soldier. I have not seen for myself, but the scouts report—

Droṇa recognized the twang of the bow and has retired. Bhishma saw an arrow in his standard. 'Enough', said he, and strikes no more. Karna is overwhelmed with arrows, and the other kings are crying, 'What can it be?' And in the alarm there is only one who, by reason of his youth, makes no account of danger, and that is Abhimanyu.¹ (24)

Bhagavān. What! has Abhimanyu come? O king,

If Subhadrā's son is in the fight, the fiery lustre of two royal houses, send another charioteer, for in front of him Brihannalā will hesitate.² (25)

King. Nay, say not so,

If he has driven back Bhishma, whose mail was not pierced by even Rāma's³ arrows, and Droṇa, who has spells for weapons, and Karna with Jayadratha, and all the other kings, will he not overpower Saubhadra with his arrows? Is he afraid of the father's reputation? Moreover, in company he will protect youth like his own, and worthy of companionship. (26)

Soldier. The prince's chariot,

When held in, moves in a curve, and when he lets it go, races ahead. When it draws near it does not dash in, and will not charge another car. Getting quite near, it whirls around and slips away. His chariot seems to give a lesson in the proper arts of driving. (27)

King. Go, bring the latest news.

Soldier. As the great king commands. [*Exit and re-enters.*] To the great king, victory! Victory to the Lord of Virāṭa! I bring your Majesty pleasant news. The cattle raid is defeated. The sons of Dhṛitarāshṭra have been put to flight.

Bhagavān. You have been fortunate.

¹ The son of Arjuna.

² Yudhishthira disguised as a brahman knows that Brihannalā is really Abhimanyu's father, Arjuna. The king does

not.

³ Paraśu-Rāma, the Rāma of the Aśv, son of Jamadagni.

King. Nay, this success is due to you. Where is the prince now?

Soldier. The prince is preparing a report of the gallant deeds of warriors whose heroism he witnessed.

King. Ah, he is engaged in a commendable task.

For when a warrior is wounded in an honourable action an honour coming hard upon the event removes his pain. (28)

And where is Bṛihannalā?

Soldier. Gone into the ladies' quarters to tell the joyful news.

King. Send for Bṛihannalā.

Soldier. As the great king commands. [*Exit.*]

[*Enter Bṛihannalā.*]

Bṛihannalā. [*Looking round thoughtfully.*] I had to strain my strength a while in stringing the Gāṇḍīva bow. In handling the arrows my fist was awkward and unsteady. There was no dexterity where the arrow-guard is fixed, and suppleness had gone. Made languid by this woman's guise, by practice I soon became myself again. (29)

For I,

Did ply the bow, with this disguise shaming me midst fighting men, but that expedition was soon so rained upon with arrows that the dust sank quickly stained with blood. (30)

Ha!

Though I have won back the kine, and have gained a victory for the king, my heart does not feel a victor's joy. For I failed to seize Duryodhana in the forefront of the fray,¹ nor brought him bound this very day into the city of Virāṭa. (31)

Decked out in this finery which the princess gave me as a token of her pleasure, I feel ashamed to face the king.² And so I will see the Lord of Virāṭa. [*Steps round looking about.*] Why, here is the noble Yudhishṭhira.

So young and yet so fond of the holiest penance-forests, a king of men who leads a brahman's life. Though he has lost his kingdom his glory is increased. Though he does not wield a sovereign's sceptre he bears the triple staff of an ascetic.³ (32)

[*Approaching.*] Bhagavān! Greeting, my salutations, my respects!

Bhagavān. Bless you.

Bṛihannalā. Hail, my lord!

¹ Duṣśāsana 'of hard commands' for Duryodhana.

³ Made of three bamboos, symbolizing control of thought, word, and deed.

² Yudhishṭhira.

King. How one is formed does not matter, nor what is one's family. High and low alike shine by their deeds. This very shape that erstwhile was despised, has now gained great respect. (33)

Bṛihannalā! Tired as you are, I shall tire you further. Tell me the details of the battle.

Bṛihannalā. Listen, my lord—

King. Nay, it was a vigorous action. It should be told in Sanskrit.

Bṛihannalā. Great king, deign to hearken.

[*Enter a Soldier.*]

Soldier. Great king, victory!

King. Thy joy seems excessive. Speak. Why art thou excited?

Soldier. Good news beyond belief. Abhimanyu has been taken. (34)

Bṛihannalā. What, taken? [*Aside.*]

I weighed the strength of our host to-day and reckoned it up.
And this very day I saw him in the fight. There is none to
match him on this side. Who could it be, now the Bamboo
brothers are slain? (35)

Bhagavān. What can it mean, Bṛihannalā?

Bṛihannalā. Bhagavān, I cannot guess his vanquisher. He is
strong and excellently trained. Perhaps he met with this
disgrace through the misfortune of his sire. (36)

King. But how was he taken?

Soldier. Fearlessly he went up to the car and lifted him out with
his two arms.

King. Who did?

Soldier. That very man the king appointed scullion in the kitchen. (37)

Bṛihannalā. [*Aside.*] So he was embraced by the noble Bhīma, not
taken prisoner after all.

Even at a distance I was delighted at the sight of him, but
a son's affection was enjoyed by one who could act more
openly. (38)

King. Well then, let Abhimanyu be well received and admitted to our
presence.

Bhagavān. O king, people may think this honouring of Abhimanyu,
a ruler of the Yādavas and Pāṇḍavas, is due to fear. Disdain would be
more appropriate.

King. The son of Yādavī does not deserve disdain. For,

He is the son of Yudhishtīra, of the same age as our son.
We claim hereditary kinship with Drupada, and thus he is our
grandson. He may soon be a son-in-law as well, for we are

the father of a maid unwed.¹ As a guest he would be worthy of respect, and the Pāṇḍavas with their great qualities we admire. (39)

Bhagavān. That is so. But we must guard against what may be said.

King. Well, who shall present him?

Bhagavān. Let Bṛihannalā do so.

King. Bṛihannalā, do you present Abhimanyu.

Bṛihannalā. As your Majesty commands. [*Aside.*] I have been given as a duty what I have long desired. [*Exit.*]

Bhagavān [*Aside.*] Now he may go and see his son in private, see him and embrace him closely. His tears of joy may flow freely. For in my presence he would be shy about his son. (40)

King. Regard the prince's heroism.

Kings like Bhīṣma are defeated. Subhadra's son is taken prisoner. To-day, in short, Uttara has indeed conquered the whole earth. (41)

[*Enter Bhīmasena.*]

Bhīma. When the house of lac was ablaze I carried out my brothers and my mother clinging to my arms. From the chariot I lifted out one youth, Subhadra's son. The exertion on the first occasion and that of to-day I think were equal. (42)

[*Enter Abhimanyu and Bṛihannalā.*]

Abhimanyu. Ah, I wonder who he is.

His chest is broad, his waist fined down to slenderness. His shoulders are erect and steady, his thighs huge and buttocks lean. He has carried me here with one arm, but, greatly stronger, he has hurt me not at all. (43)

Bṛihannalā. This way, prince.

Abhimanyu. Oh, but who is this other?

Adorned with lady's ornaments that suit him ill, he is like an elephant bull tricked out in the trappings of his mate. He seems small in this disguise, but his energy shows him great. He resembles Shiva masquerading as his spouse.²

Bṛihannalā. [*Aside to Bhīma.*] What have you done, my noble brother, in bringing him here?

He is disgraced as being defeated in his first fight, Subhadra will grieve being parted from her darling son. Then Kṛiṣṇa will be angered to hear of his reverse. Well! no need of

¹ Uttarā, affianced to Abhimanyu at the end of the act.

² Uṃā.

many words, thou hast shamefully misused the brute force of thy arms. (45)

Bhīma. Arjuna !

Bṛīhannalā. What do you say ? This is the son of Arjuna.

Bhīma. [*Aside to Bṛīhannalā.*] I recognize the drawbacks of his capture, but who could endure to leave his own son in the hands of foes ? Methought that Draupadi should see him, for she is sunk in woe ever longing for her children, that is why I brought him. (46)

Bṛīhannalā. [*Aside to Bhīma.*] Noble brother, I have a great yearning to talk with him. Make him speak.

Bhīma. Very well. Abhimanyu !

Abhimanyu. 'Abhimanyu' indeed !

Bhīma. He is angry with me. Do you speak to him.

Bṛīhannalā. Abhimanyu !

Abhimanyu. How now ? Am I 'Abhimanyu' to you ?

Do low-caste people address the scions of the warrior race by their names ? Is this the etiquette of this place ? Or is this an insult for my capture ? (47)

Bṛīhannalā. Abhimanyu ! Is thy mother well ?

Abhimanyu. What ! You speak of my mother ?

Art thou my King of Righteousness, or Bhīmasena or Arjuna, that thou boardest me like a father, and askest me news of ladies in my house ? (48)

Bṛīhannalā. And, Abhimanyu, Kṛṣṇa the son of Devakī, is he also well ?

Abhimanyu. What, even him you call by name ? Yes, of course. He must be well if he be associated with you.

[*Both look at each other.*]

Abhimanyu. Are you two making a mock of me ?

Bṛīhannalā. No, not at all.

Granted Arjuna is his father and Janārdana his uncle, it is proper for a youngster fully armed to be worsted in the battle. (49)

Abhimanyu. Enough of this idle chatter.

My own praises I may not sing. In our family it is not seemly. Do but see the arrows in the slain. You will find no other name. (50)

Bṛīhannalā. [*Aside to Bhīma.*] What he says is true enough. In the whole array of chariots, cavalry, fierce elephants, and foot, there was none he left unwounded, so dexterous was his

archery. I should have been hit myself if I had not turned aside the car. (51)

[*Aloud.*] That is mere bragging. Why were you taken prisoner by a foot soldier?

Abhimanyu. Unarmed he came at me, and so was I captured. For who would strike a man that has laid down his arms, if he remembered Arjuna was his father? (52)

Bhīma. [*Aside.*] Blessed indeed is Arjuna who himself has witnessed both his son's pride in his father and his prowess in the conflict. (53)

King. Hasten hither Abhimanyu.

Bṛīhannalā. This way, prince, this way. Here is the king. Go up to him.

Abhimanyu. Ah! Whose king?

Bṛīhannalā. No, no, no. He is sitting with a brahman.

Abhimanyu. With a brahman? [*Approaching.*] Reverend sir, I salute you.

Bhagavān. Come hither, child.

Mayest thou attain the qualities combined in one, thy father, heroism and perseverance, modesty and kindness, and compassion for his own people, together with victory in archery and prowess in war. And of the other four do thou attain whatever is of good report. (54)

Abhimanyu. I thank you.

King. Come here, my son. Why do you not greet me? Oho! How arrogant is this warrior stripling. Well, I shall humble his pride. Who took him prisoner?

Bhīma. Great king, I did.

Abhimanyu. 'Unarmed' you should add.

Bhīma. Heaven forfend!

My own two arms plump with sturdy shoulders, that is my weapon. Those are the things to fight with, weaklings use the bow. (55)

Abhimanyu. Say not so, sirrah!

Are you my middle uncle, whose arm is like a host, whose valour needs no artifice? Those words were suitable for him. (56)

Bhagavān. My son, who is this middle one?

Abhimanyu. Listen. Nay, I will not make a retort to a brahman. It were well if some one else would speak.

King. Very well, reply to me. Who is this middle one, my son?

Abhimanu. Listen. It is he

Who made a halter for Jarāsandha with an arm about his neck, and by that irresistible act cheated Kṛishṇa of his claim thereto. (57)

King. Thy haughty words will not anger me, thy anger gives me pleasure. What can I say without offence. 'How are you?' or 'you may go?' (58)

Abhimanyu. If you would show me a favour,
Treat me as a captive should be treated, with fetters on my feet. I was carried here, only Bhīma's arms shall carry me away. (59)

[*Enter Uttara.*]

Uttara. This false praise irks me, though they show devotion in their lying words. Extolled about this battle I must accept their compliments, but at heart I am ashamed. (60)

[*Approaching.*] Bhagavān, I salute you.

Bhagavān. Bless you!

Uttara. Daddy! I salute you.

King. Come to me, my son. Long may you live. Have you honoured the brave warriors who did their duty in the battle?

Uttara. I have. Now do you honour him who deserves it most.

King. Who is that, my son?

Uttara. His Highness here, Dhanañjaya.¹

King. What? Dhanañjaya?

Uttara. Why, yes. This noble prince

Took his bow and quivers twain with shafts unending and from the cemetery he defeated Bhīshma and the other kings and protected me. (61)

King. Is this so?

Brīhannalā. By your grace, great king,

By reason of his youth he is confused, strikes blows but knows it not. Having done it all himself he fancies it the work of another. (62)

Uttara. You can remove your doubt. I shall only say,

Here is the hidden scar on his forearm inflicted by the Gāṇḍīva's string, a scar that after a dozen years is still discoloured. (64)

Brīhannalā. This scar of mine was made by removing bracelets. Pressure has changed the colour and it comes just in the place of an arrow-guard. (64)

King. Just let me see.

¹ 'Winning wealth', a name of Arjuna.

Bṛihannalā. If I am Arjuna, of the Bharata clan, whose limbs were licked by Kudra's darts, then 'tis evident, this is Bhīmasena and this is King Yudhishtīra. (65)

King. Yudhishtīra! Bhīma! Arjuna!¹ Could you not trust me? Very well, when the right time comes. Bṛihannalā, go into the inner apartments.

Bṛihannalā. As your Majesty commands.

Bhagavān. No, Arjuna; you must not enter. Our promise is fulfilled.

Arjuna. As my noble brother bids.

King. By the residence of the Pāṇḍavas, heroes true to their troth and keepers of their word, my house is cleansed of stain. (66)

Abhimanyu. Then here are my respected kinsmen.² That's why They were not wroth when I insulted them but laughed and taunted back. Bravo! the cattle raid that has brought me to see my kin.

[*To Bhīmasena.*] O uncle,

It was from ignorance I did not salute thee before. Pray forgive this error in thy son. (67)

Bhīma. Come here, my son. May you be as brave as your father.

Abhimanyu. Thank you.

Bhīma. Now, my son, salute your father.

Abhimanyu. Oh, daddy, I salute you.

Arjuna. Come to my arms, my son! [*Embraces him.*]

This clasping of my own son's body in my arms gladdening my heart, was banished for thirteen years but has now returned to me. (69)

Now, my son, you should salute the Lord of the Virāṭas.

Abhimanyu. My salutations.

King. Come here, dear child.

Mayest thou attain the patience of Yudhishtīra, Bhīma's might, and the skill of Arjuna. Mayest thou attain the beauty of Mādri's sons,³ with the wisdom and the glory of Krishna, the Beloved of the World. (70)

[*Aside.*] But this intimacy with my daughter⁴ troubles me. What shall I do? Good, I have it. Ho, without there!

[*Enter servant.*]

Servant. To the great king, victory.

King. Bring me some water.

¹ Dharmarāja, Vrikodara, Dhana jaya.

vas.

² Lit. fathers.

³ Nakula, and Sahadeva, younger Pāṇḍa-

⁴ Uttarā. Arjuna disguised as Bṛihannalā has been living in the inner rooms.

Servant. As the great king commands. [*Exit and re-enter.*] Here is the water.

King. [*Taking it.*] Arjuna! As a guerdon for the defeat of the cattle raid do thou accept my daughter, Uttarā.

Bhagavān. So are our heads bowed down.

Arjuna. [*Aside.*] He weighs my virtue. [*Aloud.*] O king,
All the ladies of thy household are dear to me and honoured
like my mother. Uttarā, whom thou offerest to me, I accept,
to wed my son. (71)

Yudhishthira. So we hold up our heads again.

King. Now he is established in the noble needs of warlike heroes,
who erstwhile performed the proper duties of an inmate of
the inner palace. (72)

To-day the stars are auspicious. So the marriage shall take place this very day.

Yudhishthira. Very well, so be it. Let us send Uttara to grandfather.¹

King. As you suggest. Come Yudhishthira, Bhīma, and Arjuna, come. In this joyful mood let us go in to the inner palace.

All. Good!

[*Exeunt omnes.*]

END OF THE SECOND ACT.

ACT III

[*Enter a Charioteer.*]

Charioteer. Ho, there, take word, take word to the warriors led by Droṇa, the preceptor of all warriors!

Casting aside all terror born of Kṛishṇa's disc, disregarding the long-lost Pāṇḍavas, they have captured Abhimanyu, nor could the Kuru bowmen protect him. Shame be on them! (1)

[*Enter Bhīshma and Droṇa.*]

Droṇa. Tell me, charioteer, tell me,

Who has carried off my pupil's son, so skilled in battle? Who is fain to fight against my superhuman shafts? Tell me the essence of the man, his weapons and strength, and I will send him messengers of mighty power. (2)

¹ Bhīshma, grand-uncle of the Pāṇḍavas, leader of the Kuru army.

Bhīṣma. Tell me, tell me, charioteer.

Unused as he was to the dangers in a retreat of broken men he kept up the fight by his youthful force. Who was it then, trained to capture elephants, could capture him like a baby when the herd has passed? (3)

[*Enter Duryodhana, Karna, and Śakuni.*]

Duryodhana. Charioteer, tell me, who has carried off Abhimanyu? I myself will set him free. For

I began the family dissension with his kin, so in this the wise will lay the blame on me. Moreover, I hold him for my son, and afterwards of the Pāṇḍavas. And though there be a feud in the family the children are not to blame. (4)

Karna. Your words are very gracious and appropriate, Gāndhārī's son. Not, I trust, from fear of thy people's wrath, nor because he is a boy. Abhimanyu has met with this disaster in the forefront of the fight on thy behalf. We failed to guard him; let us throw away our bows and don the robes of bark.¹ (5)

Śakuni. Subhadra's son has many protectors. We may consider him as released already.

The King of Virāṭa himself will set him free when he learns he is the son of Arjuna. This very day he will release him remembering Dāmodara², unconquered in the field of battle. Or he will let him go through fear of Kṛiṣṇa's brother, who smashed the demon Pendulous brandishing a ploughshare in his rage. Nay, mighty Bhīma will bring him here after slaughtering those powerful foes. (6)

Drona. Speak out, O charioteer! How was he taken?

Was his chariot overturned? Were his horses out of hand? Did the ground give way beneath the wheels? Was the quiver short of arrows? Didst thou fail him? Was the bow made useless by the snapping of the string? These are the accidents of battle that come by fate on those that fight in cars. Or perhaps the foemen dragged him off with a flight of arrows. Yet is he a master of the art. (7)

Charioteer. Venerable sir, he is the science of archery incarnate. Does your reverence not know him?

'Twas none of the faults thou hast retailed, and he the mighty warrior was one great stream of arrows; my car was like the blazing ring of a whirling firebrand. A foot-soldier came up and captured him. (8)

¹ Of ascetics in the forest.

² Kṛiṣṇa, Abhimanyu's uncle.

All. What? A foot-soldier?

Droṇa. What sort of foot-soldier was that?

Charioteer. Shall I describe his appearance or his prowess?

Bhishma. Women are described by their appearance, men by their prowess. So tell us of his prowess.

Charioteer. Venerable sir!

Duryodhana. What boots this praise of some one with phrases puffed with pride. Say what you will, I have no fear, though his speed be like the wind's. (9)

Charioteer. Deign to hear, your Majesty.

Surpassing the horses in speed he laid his hand upon the car, and, though the steeds had their necks outstretched, the car stood motionless. (10)

Bhishma. Then we may lay aside our arms.

All. Why so?

Bhishma. If the car was brought to a standstill by one arm, we must suppose it in the grip of Bhīmasena. For once before on foot he defeated Jayadratha who was carrying off King Drupada's daughter. (11)

Droṇa. Bhishma is right. I taught him from a boy and know his pace. For in the archery school

He would draw to the ear and let fly his shaft, and when I said he had moved his head, went swift as a bolt and caught the arrow ere it reached the mark. (12)

Śakuni. What nonsense you are talking! I will put you one question. Is there no other strong man in the world? You attribute everything to your favourites. Do you all regard the Pāṇḍavas as pervading the whole earth? (13)

Bhishma. King of Gāndhāra, it is only an inference.

We all ride to battle on our chariots equipped with swords and bows. Only two have ever gone into the fray with their own bare arms as weapons, Balarāma and Bhīmasena. (14)

Śakuni. All of us, without love of daring, were suddenly defeated by one man, and some will say that Uttara, that very man, was Arjuna himself. (15)

Droṇa. Oh, King of Gāndhāra, have you any doubt in this?

Could Uttara draw in battle a bow that hisses with a flight of rainless thunderbolts? Could Uttara's shafts make the sun-shine vanish? Or cause the momentary setting of the sun? (16)

Bhishma. Gāndhārī's son, it is plain enough. Surely you know, By the words his arrow-feathers spell on the tip of the bow-

string's tongue. Arjuna drew the bow and sends a message for our ears. (17)

[*Enter a Charioteer.*]

Charioteer. Venerable sir, greeting. It were well to make peace.

Bhishma. Why?

Charioteer. It had been fitting to make peace before, when an arrow fell upon the standard, for this arrow has some one's name written on its end. (18)

Bhishma. Bring it here. [*Charioteer hands over the arrow.*]

Bhishma. [*Takes the arrow and examines it.*] My child, Gāndhāra, my eyes are dim with age. Read me the word on this arrow.

Śakuni. [*Takes the arrow and reads.*] Arjuna's. [*Throws the arrow down. It falls at Droṇa's feet.*]

Droṇa. [*Picking up the arrow.*]

Come, come, my son.

This arrow was shot by my pupil to salute Bhishma. It has now fallen on the ground at my feet to salute me as well in my turn. (19)

Śakuni. Nay, not so. Shall we have faith in the evidence of an arrow? Any warrior there may be named Arjuna, he may well have shot this dart. Moreover, something written by Uttara should be brought to light. (20)

Duryodhana. If any falsehood is abroad that I may surrender them the realm, then half the realm I will not give over till I have seen Yudhishṭhira. (21)

[*Enter Servant.*]

Servant. To the great king, victory. A messenger has arrived from the Virāṭa city.

Duryodhana. Let him enter.

Servant. As your Majesty commands. [*Exit.*]

[*Enter Uttara.*]

Uttara. The journey is short, I let out my steeds to their utmost speed, yet was my chariot delayed on the way; all round were so many tuskers slain by Kaunteya's shafts, my horses could hardly move, the ground was so uneven. (22)

[*Comes forward with folded hands.*]

Preceptor, grandsire, and all this assembly of kings, I salute you.

All. Long may you live.

Droṇa. What is the message of his Highness of Virāṭa?

Uttara. I have not come from him.

Droṇa. Then who has sent you?

Uttara. His Majesty, Yudhishthira.

Droṇa. What saith the King of Righteousness ?

Uttara. Hearken.

Uttarā is given in marriage to my son. I invite this assembly of kings. Shall it be with you or over here ? Or where shall the wedding take place ? (23)

Śakuni. Over there, over there.

Droṇa. This business brought us here, the five days have not ended.

The gift vouchsafed with solemn rite should now be rightfully presented. (24)

Duryodhana. Very well, I grant the Pāṇḍavas the realm they had before. For if troth be dead all men are done ; as troth stands firm, so do they. (25)

Droṇa. Oh joy ! now are we all content in the union of the mighty houses. May our lion-king rule over all this earth !

[*Exeunt omnes.*]

FINIS.

THE MIDDLE ONE

(*Madhyama-vyāyoga*)

INTRODUCTION

THIS one-act play is founded on an incident in the Mahābhārata, which is in the nature of a fairy tale. In the ninth section of the first book we hear of the demon or giant Hiḍimba. As the Pāṇḍavas are flying through the forest this giant smells humans and sends his sister, with the feminine form of the same non-aryan name, to bring them in. The ogress Hiḍimbā finds Bhīma keeping watch, falls in love with him, and assumes the form of a lovely maiden, but he resists her advances. Then the ogre comes along, and, finding his sister in conversation with Bhīma, threatens to kill her also. After a long argument Bhīma fights the giant and kills him. He has a mind to kill the sister Hiḍimbā also, but allows himself to be won over and marries her instead. After some time she gives birth to the demon giant Ghaṭotkaca ('Potsherd') and then leaves Bhīma with his consent. (*IX. Hiḍimba-vadha-parvan.*) That is all the Great Epic tells us. We hear no more of the ogress, though her semi-human son appears in battle and is finally killed by Karna. Our dramatist imagines a situation when Bhīma should come across this semi-demon son of his and naturally not recognize him. The motif of a father meeting and sometimes fighting his own son unawares is familiar. That a hero should find a son in such a monster seems original.

The play introduces an old brahman with his wife and three sons pursued by Potsherd (Ghaṭotkaca), whose mother, Hiḍimbā, has ordered him to find her a human for her breakfast. There is no escape. The Pāṇḍava hermitage is believed to be near by, but the Pāṇḍavas are away. Even if the middle one (i.e. the second) Bhīma has remained to guard the settlement, he would be roaming far for exercise. Each member of the brahman family claims to be the victim. The second son, the middle one, gets his way. He is allowed to go and quench his thirst in a forest pool. The demon is impatient and demands the name of the victim. He is told he is the middle one. That serves him as a name and he shouts for 'Middle one'.

Bhīma passing by, hears a voice shouting 'Middle one' and thinks it is calling him. The demon is puzzled by the appearance of another

‘middle one’. This emphasis on *Madhyama* ‘middle one’ explains the name of the play, *Madhyama-vyāyoga*. (A *Vyāyoga* is a one-act play on a military or heroic episode without any love interest.) Then there is the scene between father and son, who do not know each other. The demon son wrestles and uses magic all in vain. Then he runs to fetch his mother, Hidimbā the giantess. Bhīma recognizes her. She tells him Ghaṭotkaca is his son. The old brahman and his family are allowed to go in peace.

DRAMATIS PERSONAE

(In order of appearance.)

Stage-manager, in Prologue.

Old man, the brahman Keśavadāsa.

Wife.

First Son.

Second Son, the 'middle one'.

Third Son.

Ghaṭotkaca ('Potsherd'), son of Bhīma and Hiḍimbā.

Bhīma or Bhīmasena, the second Pāṇḍava, called here the 'middle one',
i.e. considering only the three sons of Kuntī.

Hiḍimbā, the giantess sister of the slain Hiḍimba, married to Bhīma
and mother of Ghaṭotkaca.

PROLOGUE

[*At the end of the Opening,¹ enter the Stage-manager.*]

Stage-manager. May Hari's foot protect you—a torment for the hearts of demons' dames—lotus-blue like a burnished blade. His foot, upraised to overstep the triple world, which gleams like a bridge of beryl in the ocean of the sky. (1)

With these words, my lords and gentlemen, I have to announce to you . . . But what is that? I thought I heard a noise, just as I was to make my announcement. Well, I must see what it is.

[*Voice behind the scene.*]

Oh, father, who, pray, is this?

Stage-manager. So be it—I understand.

By his speech² this is evidently a brahman. He is terrified by some dauntless evil creature. (2)

[*Behind the scenes.*]

Oh, father, who, pray, is this?

Stage-manager. Ah! Now I understand. This must be the son of the Middle Pāṇḍava, an ogre, sprung like fire from the firestick his mother Hiḍimbā, and a terror to brahmans that have done him no harm. Oh! how very sad is the plight of this brahman with his wife and children.

Here indeed,

This is an aged brahman and his wife, with their weary children round them, followed by a monster of the night.

He is distraught like a bull with his cow and frightened calf pursued by a tiger. (3)

[*Exit.*]

END OF PROLOGUE.

ACT I

[*Enter the old man Keśavadāsa with his wife and three sons, and after them Ghaṭotkaca.*]

Old Man. Oh! who, indeed, is this,

With hair streaming like the morning rays, with long yellow eyes blazing in their frowning sockets, with necklet of gold,

¹ Nāṇḍī, see p. ix.

² Lit. by his uttering the word—*bhoḥ*.

looking like a lightning cloud, the very image of the Destroyer at the annihilation of an Age? (4)

First Son. Oh! father, who ever is this?

With eyes like a pair of planets, with his broad and muscular chest, with locks of golden brown and garments of yellow silk, black as a mass of darkness with white protruding teeth, he resembles a storm¹ cloud half concealing the digit of the moon. (5)

Second Son. Who is it? Oh,

That stands shining there, with teeth like the tusks of an elephant calf, with a snout as long as a plough, with arms like the trunk of a lordly tusker, with the hue of a dark blue cloud lit up like a fire of burnt offering, dire as the wrath of Śiva destroying the Triple City?² (6)

Third Son. Oh! father, who, pray, is this that troubles us?

A thunderbolt on lofty mountains, a falcon among all the birds, a lion on herds of deer, Death in a human form. (7)

Wife. My lord! who is this that afflicts us?

Ghaṭotkaca. Ho, Brahman, stay,

Why dost thou flee, thy fortitude destroyed by fear of me; devoid of ability to protect thy frightened wife and sons? like a harried snake and its mate gliding swiftly with the fire of its wrath fanned by the wind from the tips of Garuḍa's wings? (8)

Ho, Brahman, do not go . . .

Old Man. Do not be afraid, my dear. Fear not, my sons, fear not. His speech is kindly.

Ghaṭotkaca. Ah me! I know that always everywhere the best among the twice-born are most worthy of honour on the earth. This is a foul deed I must do to-day, but it is by my mother's behest, and that removes all hesitation. (9)

Old Man. My dear, don't you remember what the reverend Jala-klinna said—'This forest is haunted by demons; you must proceed with caution.' That very danger has befallen us.

Wife. Then why do you seem so indifferent?

Old Man. What can I do, unfortunate that I am?

Wife. Why, let us call for help.

First Son. But, mother, to whom can we call?

This wood is desolate, the horizon blocked by numerous trees

¹ Lit. 'new'.

² Tripura, 'triple citadel', three Asura fortresses of gold, silver, and iron burned by Śiva.

dark as masses of shade, and the depths thereof are full of birds and beasts, a place where only hermits would wish to dwell. (10)

Old Man. Do not be afraid, my dear, that mention of a place where hermits would wish to dwell has almost removed my apprehension. Not far from here, I think, must be the Pāṇḍavas' hermitage. Now the Pāṇḍavas

are fond of battle and kind to those who seek their protection: men of mighty deeds, taking sides with the oppressed. They have the power to inflict proper punishment on such perpetrators of frightful deeds. (11)

First Son. But, father, the Pāṇḍavas are away, I think.

Old Man. How do you know, my son?

First Son. I heard from a brahman who had been to that hermitage, they had gone to the great sage Dhaumya's to assist at the sacrifice called 'One Hundred Vessels'.

Old Man. Alas! we are lost.

First Son. But they didn't all go, father. The middle one was set to look after the hermitage.

Old Man. If that is so, it is as good as having all the Pāṇḍavas at hand.

First Son. At this moment he also, I fear, has gone some distance away taking exercise.

Old Man. Alas! we have no hope. Nay, my son, I will supplicate him.

First Son. You may spare your pains.

Old Man. Entreaty, my son, is a council of despair.

First Son. Very well, let us see. Ho, fellow, will you let us go?

Ghaṭotkaca. You may go—on one condition.

Old Man. What condition?

Ghaṭotkaca. My worthy mother commanded me, saying, go into the forest, my son, and find me a human and bring him to me for my breakfast. And then I came across you.

With your virtuous spouse and two of your sons you may go free, but taking thought of faults and merits one son you must surrender. (12)

Old Man. Out on you, vile demon. Am I not a brahman?

A venerable brahman, learned in the scriptures, how could I obtain salvation if I gave my virtuous son to a cannibal? (13)

Ghaṭotkaca. O best of twice-born men! And you yield not one son to my demand, in a trice you will be destroyed with all your family as well. (14)

Old Man. Good wife, this is my decision.

This body of mine, decrepit with age, has fulfilled its function :
this body purified by sacraments I will offer as a burnt oblation to this demon that I may save my sons. (15)

Wife. Nay, nay, my lord. A true wife exists for her husband only. This body has borne its fruit. I will save my lord and family.

Ghaṭotkaca. Oh, no, my worthy mother does not want a woman. You must withdraw.

Old Man. I will come with you.

Ghaṭotkaca. Hm! you are old, away with you.

First Son. Oh, father, I wish to say something.

Old Man. Speak out, my son.

First Son. I would fain preserve my parents' lives with my own, prithee let me go to save the family. (16)

Second Son. Say not so, good brother.

In the home and in the world the eldest is the best, best beloved of his parents, so it is I that will go, mindful of duty to my seniors. (17)

Third Son. Not so, my brothers.

An elder brother is like a sire, as theologians have declared, so I am the one to save my seniors' lives. (18)

First Son. No, boy, no!

When a father is in trouble the eldest son assists him, so it is I that will go to save my parents' lives. (19)

Old Man. The eldest is the most desired, I cannot give him up.

Wife. As my lord wants the eldest, so I want the youngest.

Second Son. Unwanted by my parents, who cares for me?

Ghaṭotkaca. I am content. Come quickly.

Second Son. Blessed am I that with my own life have protected the lives of my elders. From the great love of kin comes the desire for death that is rare indeed. (20)

Ghaṭotkaca. How this brahman lad dotes on his relations!

Second Son. Father, I salute you.

Old Man. Come here, my son.

Devoted to thy elders thou hast rescued them with thine own life; mayst thou obtain the world divine that those with soul unsanctified may hardly gain. (21)

Second Son. I thank you. Mother, I salute you.

Wife. My child, farewell.

Second Son. Thank you. Brother, I salute you.

First Son. Come, boy, come.

Embrace me closely, as thou art embraced by the brightest virtues. Thy fame shall embrace the whole world. (22)

Second Son. Thank you.

Third Son. Brother, I salute you.

Second Son. Good-bye.

Third Son. Thank you.

Second Son. Ho! fellow, I have a word to say.

Ghaṭotkaca. Say on, but quickly.

Second Son. In this forest ride I see there is a pool. There would I allay my thirst before departing for the other world.

Ghaṭotkaca. Stout-hearted! Go, but come quickly; the time for my mother's meal is passing.

Second Son. Father, here I go. [*Exit.*]

Old Man. Alas! alas! we are robbed. Oh! we are robbed.

Three splendid peaks there were in the range of my posterity.
The breaking of the middle peak torments my heart exceedingly. (23)

Alas! my son. What, gone?

A youth as fair as youth itself, thy mind devoted to self-control and study of the scriptures, art thou to perish like a tree that has blossomed and is smashed by the tusks of a mighty elephant? (24)

Ghaṭotkaca. The brahman lad is tarrying. The time for my mother's meal is passing. Well, what shall I do about it? Good, I know. Brahman, call your son.

Old Man. Ough! Your words are more than devilish.

Ghaṭotkaca. Why, he is angry! Forgive me, I pray. It is the fault of my nature. But what is the name of your son?

Old Man. That, too, you cannot hear from me.

Ghaṭotkaca. Of course not. Ho! brahman boy, what is the name of your brother?

First Son. The ascetic unfortunate middle one.

Ghaṭotkaca. 'Middle One' is a good name for him. I shall call him myself. Ho there! Middle One, Middle One, come here at once!

[*Enter Bhīmasena.*]

Bhīma. Ah, whose voice is this?

Loudly this voice resounds in this close-packed forest dense with trees and resonant with the notes of innumerable birds, and it thrills my heart so mightily it resembles the voice of Dhanañjaya. (25)

Ghaṭotkaca. The brahman lad is tarrying. My mother's meal-time is

passing by. What am I to do? I know; I must shout at the top of my voice. Ho there! Middle One, come here at once!

Bhīma. Ah, who is in this wood interrupting my exercise by shouting after me, 'Middle One, Middle One'? Well, we will just see. [*Steps and looks round.*] Oh here's a handsome fellow—

Lion-faced and lion-jawed, with eyes like sparkling wine, his voice is soft though deep. Eyebrows brown, with a falcon nose and the jaws of an elephant king, he has long and flowing hair. Broad-chested but slender-waisted as a thunderbolt, he stalks like a tusker bull. Arms long and shoulders stout, endowed with enormous strength, he is clearly the son of some world-hero born of a demon dame. (26)

Ghaṭotkaca. He still tarries and the time is passing. I must call him again as loud as I can.¹ Middlemost, Middlemost, come here at once!

Bhīma. Well, here I am.

Ghaṭotkaca. This is not the brahman lad. Oh, but this fellow is handsome!

With arms like golden palm-trees, in the waist thin, with sides as smooth as Garuḍa's wings, he is like a lion. He might be Viṣṇu, his eyes like petals of a lotus blooming wide. He attracts my eyes like a kinsman visitor. (27)

Ho! Middle One. I am shouting for you.

Bhīma. But I am here.

Ghaṭotkaca, What? Are you also Middle One?

Bhīma. Nay, none else.

Middlemost am I of the invulnerable and mighty. Born of the middle world, good sir, and of my brethren I am the middle one. (28)

Ghaṭotkaca. It must be so.

Bīma. Moreover,

Of the five elements the middle one and middlemost of kings, I am middlemost in the world and in all affairs. (29)

Old Man. He declares that he is middlemost, so he must be the middle Pāṇḍava, come here to save us as if arisen from the Pride of Death. (30)

[*Enter Second Son.*]

Second Son. Sipping the bright drops on the lotus leaves of this pool, that none may get in the other world, I have myself made libation to myself. (31)

[*Approaching.*] Ho, fellow, here I am.

¹ Compressed to avoid the third repetition.

Ghaṭotkaca. So you have come at last, you Middle One. This way, then.

Old Man. [*Going up to Bhīma.*] Oh, Middle One! Rescue a brahman family.

Bhīma. Have no fear. I the middle one salute you.

Old Man. May you live for ever like the very air.¹

Bhīma. I thank you. What, sir, has alarmed you?

Old Man. Hearken. I am a brahman, Keśavadāsa by name, a resident of the village Yūpa in Kuru-jaṅgala, where Yudishṭhira, king of the Kurus, used to reign. I belong to the Māṭhara clan and am a priest of the Kalpa school. Now I have an uncle Yajñabandhu, who lives in a village Udyāmaka in the north and belongs to the Kuśika clan. I set out with my wife to attend the initiation of his son.

Bhīma. I wish you a safe journey. What then?

Old Man. Why, then

There comes this demon, with limbs as black as a storm of rain, with eyes as large as lotus leaves, with the sportive gait of the lord of beasts, with ghastly projecting teeth—oh! he wants to slay me with my wife and sons, as if he feared nobody in the world, right in the face of men like you. (32)

Bhīma. So, he has barred a brahman's path. Well, I will restrain him. Ho, fellow, stop! stand, I say.

Ghaṭotkaca. Here I am.

Bhīma. Why are you molesting this brahman?

The old priest is like the moon, bright with the beauty of his wife, with the constellations of his sons around him, and thou art come like the demon Rāhu² to devour him. (33)

Ghaṭotkaca. Why, yes. I am Rāhu.

Bhīma. Ah,

Pray release this brahman, most excellent, with wife and sons, for he has performed his duty and should not be smitten for any offence. (34)

Ghaṭotkaca. I shall not let him go.

Bhīma. [*Aside.*] Whose son can he be?

Ah, who can it be, this thief of all my brothers' qualities? His youthful haughtiness puts me in mind of Subhadrā's son.³ (35)

[*Aloud.*] Come, my man, set him free.

Ghaṭotkaca. He shall not go free.

¹ A play on *dirghāyur* 'long-lived' and *Vāyur* 'wind'.

² Rāhu the devouring demon of eclipses.

³ Abhimanyu.

Though my sire should sternly bid me to release him, yet would I not obey, for he is seized by the orders of my mother. (36)

Bhīma. [*Aside.*] What, the orders of his mother? The poor good fellow shows his filial obedience.

A mother is for humans the deity of deities. By honouring our mother's command we have come to this condition. (37)

[*Aloud.*] Well, my man, let me put you a question.

Ghaṭotkaca. Ask it quickly.

Bhīma. What is the name of your mother?

Ghaṭotkaca. You shall hear. The demon dame Hiḍimbā,

And she, happy lady, has for her lord the great-souled Pāṇḍava, the light of the Kuru race, as the sky has the full moon. (38)

Bhīma. [*Aside.*] So, then, this is Hiḍimbā's son. He may well be proud.

His form, his courage, and his strength are like his sire's, but what heart has he, devoid of pity for our subjects? (39)

[*Aloud.*] Come now, you must set him free.

Ghaṭotkaca. Nay, I will not.

Bhīma. Brahman, take thy son. I will go with this fellow myself.

Second Son. No, no, you must not.

Already have I resigned my life for the sake of my 'elders' lives. Thou art young, beautiful, and virtuous. Thou must remain on the surface of the earth. (40)

Bhīma. Noble youth, say not so. I am born of the warrior race. Most worthy of honour is a brahman. So I wish to redeem the body of a brahman with my own.

Ghaṭotkaca. So he is a warrior. That is why he is so haughty. Well, I will kill this one and take him away. Who will prevent me?

Bhīma. I will.

Ghaṭotkaca. You will?

Bhīma. Certainly.

Ghaṭotkaca. Then come yourself.

Bhīma. You may be very brave and strong, but I will not follow you. Take me by force, if you can.

Ghaṭotkaca. Don't you know who I am?

Bhīma. Yes. I know you are my son.

Ghaṭotkaca. What do you mean by calling me your son?

Bhīma. How angry he is. Forgive me, I pray. Warriors address all their subjects as sons. And so I used the word.

Ghaṭotkaca. You use the weapon of a coward.

Bhīma. By the truth I swear, I know not what fear is. I would fain learn of it from you. What is it like? Tell me, good sir, and when I know the good and bad of it I can decide accordingly. (41)

Ghaṭotkaca. I will teach you what fear is. Take a weapon.

Bhīma. A weapon? I have this one.

Ghaṭotkaca. How do you mean?

Bhīma. Like a pillar of gold, delighting in the capture of foes, this my own right arm is a weapon worthy of myself. (42)

Ghaṭotkaca. This is like my father Bhīmasena.

Bhīma. Who is this Bhīma?

Tell me, good sir, whom does thy sire resemble? Śiva the Creator, Kṛishṇa, Indra the Mighty, or the God of Death? (43)

Ghaṭotkaca. All of them.

Bhīma. Oh, fie on you, that is untrue.

Ghaṭotkaca. What? 'Untrue' says he? He insults my father. Well, I will pull up this thick tree to strike him. [*Does so.*] Why, I cannot kill him with this. What shall I do? Good. I will tear off this mountain peak to smite him.

This rocky peak I'll hurl to take thy life on its way.

Bhīma. Though full of rage a woodland elephant should not assail a tiger in the forest. (44)

Ghaṭotkaca. [*Striking.*] Why, even with this I cannot kill him. What shall I do? I know;

Bhīma's son am I, grandson of the Lord of the Sky. Stand now well prepared, none is my match in wrestling. (45)

[*They both wrestle.*]

Ghaṭotkaca. [*Holding Bhīma fast.*] Gripped in my arms like a tusker in strong chains canst thou master my strength and escape? (46)

Bhīma. [*Aside.*] What, has he caught me? Ha! Suyodhana, your opponent gains in strength. Take care! [*Aloud.*] Ho, fellow, on your guard!

Ghaṭotkaca. I'm on my guard all right.

Bhīma. [*Shaking himself free.*] Abandon thy pride in thy strength, my hero, thy mettle is gauged. The wrestling bout was no distress to me.¹ (47)

Ghaṭotkaca. Even so I cannot kill him. What now? Yes, I have it. There is the magic noose I had by mother's favour. I will bind him

¹ Wrongly numbered 46 in the text.

with that and lead him away. Where is there some water? Ho, mountain, I prithee, water! Ha! here it streams. [*Takes a sip and recites a charm.*] My man,

Bound with a magic bond, helpless thou shalt not move.

Bound by cords thou art as bright as Indra's banner at a festival. (48) [*Binds him by magic.*]

Bhīma. So I am bound by a magic noose. What shall I do now? There is a charm for releasing magic bonds that I learned by Śiva's favour. That will I recite. But where is there water? Good, oh brahman boy, bring me water in your gourd.

Old Man. Here is water.

[*Bhīmasena sips the water, recites the charm, and dissolves the magic.*]

Ghaṭotkaca. Ah, the noose fails. What to do? That's it. Remember, man, your former promise.

Bhīma. Promise? Now I remember. Lead on.

[*Both step around.*]

Old Man. What shall we do, my sons? There goes Bhīma.¹ Subduing this shining demon of dreadful form endowed with terrible courage and strength of arms, he shakes him off, and strides quietly on like a bull playfully tossing off raindrops in a moment. (49)

Ghaṭotkaca. Stay here—I will tell my mother you have come.

Bhīma. Very well. Go on.

Ghaṭotkaca. [*Going forward.*] Mother, it is I, Ghaṭotkaca, that calls, saluting you. I have brought you a man for your meal that you have been wanting so long.

[*Enter Hiḍimbā.*]

Hiḍimbā. Live long, my child. What sort of a man have you brought?

Ghaṭotkaca. He is a man by his speech, lady, not by his valour.

Hiḍimbā. What, a brahman?

Ghaṭotkaca. No, not a brahman.

Hiḍimbā. Then an elder?

Ghaṭotkaca. He is not old.

Hiḍimbā. A boy?

Ghaṭotkaca. Not a boy.

Hiḍimbā. If so, let me have a look at him.

[*Both step around.*]

Hiḍimbā. Is this the man you have brought?

Ghaṭotkaca. What is he, lady?

Hiḍimbā. You lunatic, he is a deity.

¹ 'Wolf-bellied', an epithet of Bhīma.

Ghaṭotkaca. Oh! whose deity

Hidimbā. Yours and mine.

Ghaṭotkaca. What proof is there of that?

Hidimbā. This is the proof. Victory to my lord!

Bhīma. [*Looking round.*] Who is this? Ah, the queen Hidimbā.

When we had lost our kingdom and wandered in the deepest glade, thou didst allay my torment, noble lady, with thy clemency inborn. (50)

What is this, Hidimbā?

Hidimbā. [*Whispers.*] That's how it was, my lord.

Bhīma. By birth, of the demons, not by behaviour.

Hidimbā. Come, madcap, salute your father.

Ghaṭotkaca. Dear father, I salute you. I am Ghaṭotkaca, the fire to burn the forest of Dhṛitarāshṭra's sons. Pray forgive your son's rashness.

Bhīma. Come to my arms, my son. Your indiscretion was delightful. [*Embraces him.*] That is what a father's heart would wish for in his son, a forest fire to burn the Dhṛitarāshṭra kin. My son, may you be of matchless strength and prowess.

Ghaṭotkaca. I thank you.

Old Man. So this is Ghaṭotkaca, Bhīmasena's son.

Bhīma. My son, salute the reverend Keśavadāsa.

Ghaṭotkaca. Reverend sir, I salute you.

Old Man. May you win virtue and renown like your father's.

Ghaṭotkaca. I thank you.

Old Man. Bhīma, you have saved my family, and raised your own to honour. Now let us depart.

Bhīma. Thanks to you all, this has ended well. Our hermitage is not far. Rest there before you go. (51)

Old Man. By giving us our lives you have shown us hospitality. So now let us take our leave.

Bhīma. Fare you well with your household. We shall meet again.

Old Man. Yes, I shall make a point of it.

[*Exit Keśavadāsa with his wife and sons.*]

Bhīma. Hidimbā! come, and you my son, Ghaṭotkaca.

We will see the reverend Keśavadāsa as far as the gate of the hermitage.

As the ocean dominates the rivers, and fire controls oblations:
as the mind is master of the senses—so is our Lord Viṣṇu the
Blessed.

[*Exeunt omnes.*]

FINIS.

THE STATUE PLAY

(*Pratimā-nāṭakam.*)

INTRODUCTION

THE story of the Statue Play is based upon that of the Rāmāyaṇa, beginning with the abandonment of the consecration of Rāma at the demand of Kaikeyī, the mother of Bharata, and ending fourteen years later with the return of Rāma to Ayodhyā.

In a play of seven acts only a few of the episodes in the epic can be employed. The most striking scene in the play is the return of Bharata to Ayodhyā, and his learning of his father's death by seeing his statue in the sculpture gallery. This scene gives the play its name, and seems to have been invented by the author.

In the First Act we hear that all the preparations are being made for the consecration of Prince Rāma by Daśaratha, the old king, his father. One of Sītā's maids brings in a bark dress from the theatre, and Sītā tries it on. We, the audience, know well enough that this is an omen of the long exile in the forest. Then Rāma comes with the news that the consecration has been set aside. The Chamberlain blames Kaikeyī, but Rāma will hear nothing against her. Lakshmaṇa comes in raging, but Rāma soothes him. Then Lakshmaṇa tells him he has 'to dwell an exile in the forests for fourteen years'. Sītā and Lakshmaṇa insist on going with him. (ACT I.)

The Second Act portrays the grief of the old king, supported by the two queens, Kausalyā and Sumitrā, the mothers of Rāma and Lakshmaṇa. Sumantra brings word of Rāma's departure with wife and brother. The king swoons and finally expires. (ACT II.)

The Third Act gives us the statue gallery. Bharata, the son of Kaikeyī, who has been staying with an uncle, returns to Ayodhyā knowing nothing of the news. His charioteer, however, knows what has happened. 'Although we know, we cannot tell him, for "Who will relate the triple bane, his father's death, his mother's lust of power, and the exile of his elder brother?"' Waiting for an auspicious moment to enter the town he goes into what looks like a temple, but proves to be a sculpture gallery. He is impressed by the statues—learns that they represent warriors of the Ikshvāku clan, namely, Dilipa, Raghu, and Aja, the last being his own grandfather. Looking at Daśaratha's statue, he is troubled, and guessing the truth, seeks to avoid it. The keeper

insists on telling him. Just then the three queens come to visit the gallery, and find Bharata there. He upbraids his own mother. She says she will explain at the proper time and place. He pays little heed to that and determines at once to go off to the forest and find Rāma and Lakshmaṇa. (ACT III.)

Bharata visits the exiles. Rāma refuses to return, and Bharata accepts the kingdom as a trust for fourteen years, but asks for Rāma's sandals that he may set them on the throne. So Bharata returns again to Ayodhyā. (ACT IV.)

Rāma converses with Sītā about the rites to be performed in his father's memory. Rāvaṇa, the demon king of Laṅkā, disguised as an ascetic, professes a wide knowledge of the sacred lore, and talks to Rāma about some wonderful deer in the Himālayas, whose flesh would satisfy the royal shade. Rāma is ready to go to the Himālayas to find the deer with golden sides. Rāvaṇa produces by magic an illusion of such a deer, and Rāma runs off to chase it. Rāvaṇa abducts Sītā, slaying the vulture Jaṭāyu. (ACT V.)

In an Interlude two old ascetics describe the fight between Rāvaṇa and the vulture Jaṭāyu. The scene then shifts to Ayodhyā. Sumantra, who had been sent to visit the exiles, returns to Bharata with the news that Rāvaṇa has abducted Sītā. Once again he reproaches Kaikeyī his mother. Then he is told how a curse had been laid on the king his father, that he should perish through grief for his son. That was the real cause of Rāma's exile, not lust of power. 'But fourteen years?' asks Bharata, 'what did you mean by that?' 'Oh, my child', the queen replies, 'it was fourteen *days* I meant to say, but in the confusion of my mind the fourteen years slipped out.' Bharata is satisfied, makes his peace with Queen Kaikeyī, and sets out to vanquish Rāvaṇa. (ACT VI.)

Rāma has slain Rāvaṇa, and is returning with Sītā. They stay at the hermitage whence Sītā was abducted. Bharata arrives with the queens and a large army—also the priests to consecrate Rāma. Rāma enters, newly consecrated, and the play ends in a chorus of congratulations. (ACT VII.)

Our dramatist has taken considerable liberties with the epic story. In the Rāmāyaṇa Bharata gets no news of Sītā's abduction, nor does he set out to vanquish Rāvaṇa; Rāma is assisted in that struggle not by an army from Oude, but by the apes and bears.

DRAMATIS PERSONAE

(In order of appearance.)

Stage-manager } in the Prologue only.
Actress }

Portress, Vijayā.

Chamberlain of Ayodhyā court. (Bālāki.)

Avadātikā, one of Sitā's maids of honour.

SITĀ, wife of Rāma, daughter of Janaka, king of Mithilā. (Hence 'Maithilī, Lady of Mithilā'.)

Maid, another of Sitā's retinue.

Second Maid, another of Sitā's retinue (Nandanikā).

RĀMA, the heir apparent, son of King Daśaratha and Queen Kausalyā.

LAKSHMAṆA, brother of Rāma, son of King Daśaratha and Queen Sumitrā.

Maid from the tiring room.

KING DAŚARATHA of Ayodhyā.

Kausalyā, chief queen of Daśaratha, mother of Rāma.

Sumitrā, second queen, mother of Lakshmaṇa.

Sumantra, minister of Daśaratha.

Sudhākāra, keeper of the Statue Gallery.

Attendant of Ayodhyā court.

BHARATA, son of King Daśaratha and Queen Kaikeyī.

Soldier of Ayodhyā.

Kaikeyī, queen, mother of Bharata.

Charioteer of Bharata.

Female ascetic.

Rāvaṇa, the demon king of Laṅkā.

Two old ascetics.

Nandilaka, servant in the hermitage.

Śatrughna, twin brother of Lakshmaṇa.

PROLOGUE

[*After the Opening*¹ *enter the Stage-manager.*]

Manager. May the Fortune of the Furrow guard us, he that is pleased with lovely verses, charming with his beauteous neck, and every auspicious mark ; the supporter whose soul inspireth awe, matchless foe of him that made the goddess cry, may he protect us in every birth.² (1)

[*By paronomasia this verse introduces the names of Sītā, Sumantra, Sugrīva, Lakshmaṇa, Rāvaṇa, Vibhīṣaṇa, and Bharata, and alludes to Pratimā in the name of the play.*]

[*Looking off behind the scene—towards the living-room.*]

Madam, come here.

[*Enter an Actress.*]

Actress. Here I am, sir.

Manager. Now, madam, sing us something about this autumn season.

Actress. Very well, sir. [*Sings.*]

Manager. This is the season when,

The swan takes her delight wandering on the banks of sand
clad in grassy silks—

[*Voice behind the scene.*]

Sir, sir !

Manager. [*Listening.*] Good ! I understand.

Bustling with joy like a portress in the royal palace. (2)

[*Exeunt ambo.*]

END OF PROLOGUE.

ACT I

[*Enter Portress.*]

Portress. Oh, sir, which of the Chamberlains is at hand ?

[*Enter Chamberlain.*]

Chamberlain. Here I am, lady. What am I to do ?

Portress. Why, sir, 'tis the command of the great king Daśaratha—warrior unmatched in the wars of gods and demons—to bring swiftly all the requisites for consecration suitable for the conferment of the dignity of sovereignty on Prince Rāma.

¹ Nāndī, see p. ix.

² Sugrīva and Vibhīṣaṇa do not appear.

Chamberlain. His Majesty's commands have been already carried out. Look you,

The umbrella with the fan, joy-drums and sacred chair are ready. The golden vessels filled with holy water are set in place with blossoms and sacrificial grass. The Pushya car is yoked. The citizens and the ministers are assembled. Near the altar stands the ornament of all the ceremony, the blessed Vasishṭha. (3)

Portress. If that is so, it is well done.

Chamberlain. Ah!

Now that the protector of the world will consecrate that moon on earth, that we call Rāma, his subjects have all that they desire. (4)

Portress. Come now, hurry up, sir.

Chamberlain. Why, lady, see how I am hurrying. [*Exit.*]

Portress. [*Stepping and looking around.*] Sambhavaka! Good Sambhavaka! Do you take a message from the king and with all courtesy hurry up the high-priest. [*Moves to another place.*] Sārasikā! Sārasikā! Go to the concert-hall and tell the actresses to be ready with a performance appropriate to the occasion. Meanwhile I will go and report to the king that everything has been done. [*Exit.*]

[*Enter Avadātikā with a dress made of bark.*]

Avadātikā. Oh, what it is to be wicked! If I tremble like this while making off with a bark dress for a joke, what must it be with one who steals another's property through greed? I want to have a good laugh, but I can't laugh alone.

[*Enter Sītā with her train.*]

Sītā. My dear, Avadātikā has a startled look. What is the matter?

Maid. Servants are always ready for mischief. Princess, she must have been up to something.

Sītā. No, no, she looks as if she wanted to laugh.

Avadātikā. [*Approaching.*] Princess, all happiness! No, Princess, I haven't done anything wrong.

Sītā. Who asked you whether you had? What have you got in your left hand, Avadātikā?

Avadātikā. A birch dress, Princess.

Sītā. A birch dress? From whom did you get it?

Avadātikā. Listen, Princess. The Lady Revā, the mistress of the tiring-room, had finished her work on the stage, and we asked her for one shoot of the *asoka* tree. But she wouldn't give it. So I thought one ill turn deserves another, and I took this dress.

Sītā. That was wrong of you. Go and take it back.

Avadātikā. But, Princess, I only took it for fun.

Sītā. Silly girl, that way a fault grows worse. Go and return it at once.

Avadātikā. As your Highness commands. [*She is about to go.*]

Sītā. Come here a moment.

Avadātikā. Here I am, Princess.

Sītā. My dear, how would it suit me, do you think?

Avadātikā. Princess, beauty looks well in everything. Try it on, your Highness.

Sītā. Bring it here. [*Takes the dress and puts it on.*] Look dear, does it suit me?

Avadātikā. It suits you beautifully. The bark seems turned to gold.

Sītā. But you, my dear, say nothing.

Maid. I have no need of words. These thrills of delight speak for me.¹ [*Shows her arm.*]

Sītā. Bring a mirror, my dear.

Maid. As Your Highness commands. [*Exit, and returns.*] Here, Princess, is a looking-glass.

Sītā. [*Looking at the maid's face.*] Never mind the looking-glass. You look as if you wanted to say something.

Maid. Princess, I heard Master Bālāki the chamberlain keep saying, 'The consecration! the consecration!'

Sītā. Somebody is to become lord of the realm.

[*Enter another Maid.*]

Second Maid. Good news, Princess, good news!

Sītā. What are you keeping back?

Second Maid. Why, the prince is to be consecrated.

Sītā. Is his father well?

Second Maid. His Majesty will consecrate the prince himself.

Sītā. If so, the news is doubly good. Give me a long and close embrace.

Second Maid. Oh, Princess, like that? [*Embraces her.*]

[*Sītā takes off her ornaments and gives them to the maids.*]

Second Maid. Princess, the joy-drums.

Sītā. Yes.

Second Maid. The drums were beaten in one place, but now they are silent.

Sītā. Perhaps the consecration is interrupted. Many things happen in courts.

¹ Lit. 'These delighted hairs.'

Second Maid. They tell me, Princess, that when the king has anointed the prince, he will go away to a forest.

Sītā. If that is so, the consecration water must wash away our tears.¹

[*Enter Rāma.*]

Rāma. Ha ! my friends.

A roll was beaten on the drums, the elders were in readiness, I was on the sacred chair, and shoulder-high the vessel whose water was to trickle over a face down-cast. The king summoned me and sent me away. The people are amazed at my patience, but is it a marvel, if a son obeys the words of his own father ? (5)

When the king dismissed me saying, ' Now you can rest, my son ', my mind breathed a sigh of relief as if a weight was removed. Happily I am still the same Rāma, and the king is king. Now I will go and see the princess of Mithilā.

Avadātikā. Oh, princess, here comes the prince, and you have not taken off the bark dress.

Rāma. Lady of Mithilā, how is it with you ?

Sītā. Oh, it is my lord. Victory to my lord !

Rāma. My lady, be seated. [*Sits down.*]

Sītā. As my lord commands. [*Sits down.*]

Avadātikā. Princess, that is the prince's ordinary dress. It seems it is n't true.

Sītā. Such a man does not say what is false, but many things can happen in a court.

Rāma. What are you saying, dear lady of Mithilā ?

Sītā. Nay, it is nothing ; this girl was talking about a consecration.

Rāma. I can understand your curiosity. There was a consecration. Listen. To-day I was summoned by the king in the presence of the Preceptor, Ministers, and citizens. The king placed me on his knee as he used to do, when I was a child. He called me by my mother's name most lovingly. Then comprising all the realm of Kosala in one gesture he said : ' Rāma, my son, do thou accept the kingdom.'

Sītā. What did my lord say then ?

Rāma. What do you think I said, Lady of Mithilā.

Sītā. I think you fell at the king's feet without a word, but sighing deeply.

Rāma. You have guessed well. Rarely are couples born with natures so alike. For thereupon I fell at his feet.

¹ Lit. ' It is not consecration water, but face-water.'

My father's tears above and mine below rained upon my head
and my father's feet. (6)

Sītā. And then ?

Rāma. Then as I was deaf to his entreaties, he conjured me by his own
life, so near the ills of age.

Sītā. Well ?

Rāma. Then—

At the consecration, while Lakshmana and Śatrughna held the
sacred vessels, and the king, still weeping, was holding the
umbrella—Mantharā came suddenly and whispered something
in the royal ear, and lo, I am not the king. (7)

Sītā. I am glad. His Majesty is king and my lord is my own dear
lord.

Rāma. Lady of Mithilā, why have you taken off your ornaments ?

Sītā. I am not wearing them now.¹

Rāma. Nay, it cannot be long you have discarded them.

The edges of thine ears are bent by snatching off their
jewellery. Thy palms are pale from the slipping of thy bangles.
These little hollows on thy limbs pressed down by the weight
of ornaments have not come level yet. (8)

Sītā. My lord's words have the power of making what is unreal seem
true.

Rāma. So then, put on your jewellery. I will hold the mirror. [*Does
so and looks closely.*] Stay,

In the mirror I seem to see a dress of bark. Or are these rays
of the sun ? Thy laughter tells me. Is this a game, or the
desire for penance ? (9)

What is it, Avadātikā ?

Avadātikā. Why, my lord, she put it on from curiosity to see if it suited
her or not.

Rāma. Why now, Lady of Mithilā, do you wear the dress of the old
men of my clan ?² I like it.³ Bring it here.

Sītā. No, no, don't say that. It's unlucky.

Rāma. Why do you stop me, lady ?

Sītā. Just when my lord's consecration has been broken off. It seems
to me unlucky.

Rāma. Raise not wrath thyself, especially in jest—for half my body
was already in it, when thou didst put it on. (10)

¹ Lit. 'I am not adorned.'

² 'Have you no love for me', Sarup.

³ Ikshvākus.

[*Voice behind the scene.*]

Woe, woe, to the king!

Sītā. What's that, my lord?

Rāma. [*Listening.*]

If this be the extravagant wailing of men and women, it shows that Fate has smitten us at the roots to manifest his power. (11)

Find out quickly. What is that noise?

[*Enter Chamberlain.*]

Chamberlain. Protection, prince, protection!

Rāma. Who, Sir, needs protection?

Chamberlain. The king.

Rāma. The king? Then say, sir, that the whole earth, in one form compact, needs guarding. But whence comes this trouble?

Chamberlain. From his own kin.

Rāma. From his own kin? Alas, there is no remedy.

The foemen strikes the body, while the kinsman strikes the heart. Who will shame me with the name of kin? (12)

Chamberlain. The Queen Kaikeyi?

Rāma. What, Mother? This then is a quality fated from the past.

Chamberlain. How so? •

Rāma. Listen. Her husband is a second Indra, in me she has a son.

What fruit can she desire that she should do an act unworthy? (13)

Chamberlain. My prince, do not attribute your own sincerity to the infatuated minds of women. Why, it was at her request that your consecration was put off.

Rāma. There are advantages, sir, in that.

Chamberlain. How so?

Rāma. Listen.

The king has been deterred from retiring to the forest. I am still a minor and subject of the king as before. The people are not troubled with the question of a new ruler. Moreover, my brothers are not deprived of their enjoyments. (14)

Chamberlain. But she came uninvited and asked that Bharata be anointed king. Was that not greed?

Rāma. From your partiality to me, sir, you overlook the truth. For, If she demands for her son a kingdom stipulated in her dower, is the greed hers? Or ours, if we robbed a brother of his realm? (15)

Chamberlain. But—

Rāma. Henceforth I wish to hear no further charge against my mother. Tell me what has happened to the king.

Chamberlain. Then after that,

Mute with grief the king dismissed me with his hand. I count it something of a blessing he went off in a swoon. (16)

Rāma. What! He fainted away?

[*Voice behind the scene.*]

What, what, lost his senses, you say?

If thou canst not brook the king being out of his wits, seize thy bow and have no compassion.

Rāma. [*Listening and looking in front of him.*]

Who has so moved the immovable Lakshmaṇa, an ocean of patience? With him enraged I seem to see a host of hundreds before me. (17)

[*Then enter Lakshmaṇa with bow and arrows in his hands.*]

Lakshmaṇa. [*Angrily.*] What, what? Lost his senses you say?

If thou canst not brook the king being out of his wits, seize thy bow and have no compassion. Every one that is gentle and mild with his king is pushed on one side. And thou likest it not, do thou leave me alone. My mind is fixed to rid the world of young women, for we have been cheated. (18)

Sītā. Sumitrā's son has siezed his bow, when he should weep. Such violence is unheard of.

Rāma. What does all this mean, Lakshmaṇa?

Lakshmaṇa. What! you ask me what it all means?

The inherited realm has been raped, the ruler has his seat of sorrow on the ground. Now do you doubt that mercy equals cowardice? (19)

Rāma. Oh, Sumitrā's son! Has my loss of the kingdom caused this excitement? Alas! you are unwise.

If Bharata be the king, or I, 'tis all the same. If thou hast a pride in thy bow, then protect the king. (20)

Lakshmaṇa. I cannot hold in my anger. Well, well, I will go. [*Walks away.*]

Rāma. This scowl of Lakshmaṇa's clinging to the creases of his brow, as though it fain would burn the Triple World, stays fixed like Fate itself. (21)

Lakshmaṇa! One moment.

Lakshmaṇa. I am waiting, sir.

Rāma. I spoke that way to steady you. Now speak out.

Shall I bend my bow on my sire if he keeps not troth with

me? Shall I let fly an arrow at my mother if she take my wealth? Shall I slay my younger brother Bharata who has no part in these troubles? Of these three crimes which will satisfy thy wrath? (22)

Lakshmaṇa. [*In tears.*] Alas, you reproach me before you understand. I care nothing about the realm for which there is such mighty moiling. But thou hast to dwell an exile in the forests for fourteen years. (23)

Rāma. That's why his Majesty fainted. Alas, that shows weakness in a ruler. Lady of Mithilā,

Bring me that dress of bark, this girl's lucky gift. I must practice virtue unattained by other kings, not even essayed. (24)

Sītā. Take it, my lord.

Rāma. Lady of Mithilā, what is your intention?

Sītā. Why, I will practise virtue with you.

Rāma. But I must go alone.

Sītā. That is why I must go with you.

Rāma. It means dwelling in the forest.

Sītā. That will be my palace.

Rāma. But you have your duties, to attend upon my parents,

Sītā. As for them, may the gods forgive me.¹

Rāma. Lakshmaṇa, dissuade her.

Lakshmaṇa. I dare not dissuade her ladyship from an opportunity so laudable.

Moonlight follows the moon even in eclipse. When the forest tree falls the creeper lies on the ground. The lord of elephants is not deserted by his mate though bogged in the mire. Let her make her pilgrimage practising virtue, for husbands are as gods to women. (25)

[*Enter Maid.*]

Maid. Princess, greeting! The Lady Revā, mistress of the tiring room, humbly reports that Avadātikā broke into the concert hall and carried off a bark dress. This is another one unworn, which may be made use of.

Rāma. Bring it here, good maid. The princess is satisfied. It is I that need one.

Maid. Pray take it. [*Hands over the garment and exit.*]

[*Rāma takes it and puts it on.*]

Lakshmaṇa. Forgive me, noble brother.

Of decorations, jewels, and garlands ever hast thou given me

¹ Lit. 'An obeisance is made to the gods.'

half, but thou hast put on all the bark thyself: for the bark it seems thou art selfish. (26)

Rāma. Oh, Maithilī, dissuade him.

Sītā. Yes, let me, Lakshmaṇa.

Lakshmaṇa. Lady!

Fain wouldst thou wait on the footsteps of my elder brother all alone. Thine shall be the right foot and the left shall be mine. (27)

Sītā. Give him half, my lord. He is in such distress.

Rāma. Lakshmaṇa! Listen. A dress of bark

Is armour for the battle of penance. It is the iron to guide the elephant of self control. Take it then, a curb for the prancing senses and charioteer of virtue. (28)

Lakshmaṇa. I thank you. [*Takes the bark and puts it on.*]

Rāma. The king's highway is all beset by citizens who have heard the news. Please send them away.

Lakshmaṇa. Noble brother, I will go in front. Way there! make way!

Rāma. Lady, take off your veil.

Sītā. As my lord commands. [*Takes it off.*]

Rāma. Good citizens, hearken to my words.

Gaze freely on this my spouse while your faces stream with tears. For women may be looked at without offence at sacrifice or wedding, in calamity or in the forest. (29)

[*Enter Chamberlain.*]

Chamberlain. Prince, you must not, must not, go. For his Majesty Has heard of your going to the forest, attended by your lady and by Lakshmaṇa determined by kindly brotherhood. He got up from the ground, his limbs all smeared with dust, and is coming hither like an ancient tusker from the wilds. [30]

Lakshmaṇa. Noble brother,

Those who dwell in forests clad in coats of bark need see nobody.

Rāma. The king shall see our palaces after we've departed. (31)

[*Exeunt omnes.*]

END OF THE FIRST ACT.

ACT II

INTERLUDE

[*Enter Chamberlain.*]

Chamberlain. Ho! Watchers at the gates! Each at your station be vigilant.

[*Enter Portress.*]

Portress. What's the matter, sir?

Chamberlain. Why, the king is set on keeping his word and unable to turn Rāma from going to the forest. His heart is burnt by the fiery pain of separation from his son. Lamenting mightily like a madman he is lying in the fountain chamber.¹

Like Meru moving close on the dissolution of an aeon, like an ocean of untold depths approaching desiccation, like the sinking sun seen only by his disc, so the king: his limbs and wits unravelled by his woe. (1)

Portress. Dear, dear! Is the king like that?

Chamberlain. Madam! begone.

Portress. Very well, sir. [*Exit.*]

Chamberlain. [*Looking all round.*] Alas! Since the day that Rāma went, Ayodhyā seems deserted. For,

Lordly elephants are off their feed, the chargers stand without a neigh, tears in their eyes. The city folk, with greybeards, babes, and women, have no thought of food or talk. With mournful faces they cry aloud and gaze the way that Rāma goes with wife and brother. (2)

Meanwhile I must attend upon the king. [*Steps around and looks off.*] Ah, here is the king attended by the great queen and Sumitrā. They have composed themselves after mastering even the overwhelming grief that comes from being separated from their sons. It is a painful situation. The poor king

Gets up to fall, gets up again lamenting loudly, again and again, and gazes out the way that Rāma went. (3)

[*Exit.*]

END OF THE INTERLUDE.

[*Enter the king as described and the two queens.*]

King. Alas, my child! Rāma! Delight of the eyes of all the worlds. Oh, Lakshmaṇa, my child! Whose every limb bears auspicious

¹ *Samudraghaka*, cf. *Vision of Vāsavadattā*, 'sea-room'.

marks. Oh, virtuous lady of Mithilā with heart devoted to thy lord! Alas, alas, they have gone. Gone, woe is me, to the forest. My own children. (4)

Oh, how strange it is that I should yearn to see Lakshmaṇa who lost all love for his father in his love for his brother. Oh, daughter Vaidehī,

Even Rāma abandons me, Lakshmaṇa reproaches me. Wilt even thou abandon me a vessel of infamy for all the world? (5)

Rāma, my son! Lakshmaṇa, my child! Daughter mine from Videha, answer me, my babies.

Alas, all is silent. None will answer me.

Son of Kausalyā, where are you?

True to thy word, with wrath subdued, unselfish and beloved of the world, so apt to serve thine elders—vouchsafe to me an answer. (6)

Oh, where is he? Where is that Rāma who delights the eyes and hearts of all the people. Where is he? So obedient to his elders. So kindly to those in distress, despising sovereignty as a trifle. My son, Rāma! If you desert your old father what boots the practice of senseless virtue? Woe is me. Alas—

Like the sun Rāma has gone, Lakshmaṇa has followed him as the day follows the sun. Sitā has disappeared like a shadow when sun and day are gone. (7)

[*Looking up above.*] Ah! Wretched fate.

Why didst thou not establish three decrees: myself to have no children; Rāma to be the son of another monarch and Kaikeyī . . . a tigress in the jungle? (8)

Kausalyā. [*Weeping.*] Peace now, Majesty, do not torment yourself beyond measure and lose all control. You are bound to see them both, and the princess, when the period is ended.

King. Oh! Who art thou?

Kausalyā. She that bare that son unloved.

King. What, art thou Kausalyā, mother of Rāma, the delight of the eyes and hearts of all mankind?

Kausalyā. Majesty! I am that unlucky woman.

King. Kausalyā! Thou art great indeed, for thou hast carried Rāma in thy womb.

While I have lost my wits and have no strength either to bear or to restrain this grief, boundless and unbearable like a flame. (9)

[*Looking at Sumitrā.*] Who is this other?

Kausalyā. Majesty! Dear Lakshmaṇa— [*Breaks off.*]

King. [*Springing up.*] Where is he? Where is Lakshmaṇa?
I cannot see him. Woe is me.

[*The two queens rise hurriedly and hold up the king.*]

Kausalyā. Majesty! I was saying—dear Lakshmaṇa's mother, Sumitrā.

King. Oh, Sumitrā!

Thy son is a good son, for in the forest day and night he
follows Rāma, best of the Raghu clan, like a shadow. (10)

[*Enter Chamberlain.*]

Chamberlain. To the king, greeting. The noble Sumantra has arrived.

King. [*Springing up in delight.*] With Rāma?

Chamberlain. No, with a chariot.

King. What? Only with a chariot? [*Falls down in a swoon.*]

Both queens. Take heart, your Majesty, take heart! [*They massage his limbs.*]

Chamberlain. Alack! Fate is inexorable. So even such great ones
incur such dire calamity! Take heart, your Majesty, take heart!

King. [*Recovering somewhat.*] Bālāki, has Sumantra come back all
alone?

Chamberlain. Why yes, your Majesty.

King. Alas! alas!

If the chariot has come back empty, my heart is broken. Now
has Death sent the chariot to fetch Daśaratha. (11)

So bring him in at once.

Chamberlain. As your Majesty commands. [*Exit.*]

King. Blessed indeed are the breezes in the forest that circle round
the lakes touching Rāma at their ease as he wanders in the
wood. (12)

[*Enter Sumantra.*]

Sumantra. [*Looking all round sorrowfully.*]

These servants leave their duties, blinded by tears welling up
through love for Rāma. Oppressed by care, their bodies burning
with sorrow, they reproach the monarch as he screams his
lamentations. (13)

[*Approaching.*] Great king—greeting.

King. Brother Sumantra.

Where is my first-born, Rāma?

No, no, I said not that aright.

Where, dear child, is Rāma thy eldest son? And where is that
daughter of the Videhas so absolutely devoted to her spouse?
Where is Sumitrā's son devoted to his elders? What do they
say of me, their wretched father on the point of death? What

do they say of one that has brought a deluge of sorrow to all my people? (14)

Sumantra. I beseech your Majesty, do not utter so inauspicious words. Ere long you shall see them.

King. You are right. My words were out of place. It was not a proper question to ask of anchorites. So tell me then, Is all well with the penance of those anchorites? And wandering at will through the forests is the lady of Videha not distressed?

Sumitrā. Did she say anything for us and the king, Sumantra? Child as she is, all dressed up in bark, sharing the pilgrimage of her lord, she is no child in her conduct.

Sumantra. They all send your Majesty word—

King. No, no. Let me hear it with names of each, an elixir for my ears and medicine for the trouble in my heart.

Sumantra. As the king commands. Rāma, ~~long life to him.~~

King. Rāma! Yes, here's Rāma. The very sound of his name brings him close to me. Go on.

Sumantra. Lakshmaṇa—~~long life to him.~~

King. Here's Lakshmaṇa. And then?

Sumantra. Janaka's daughter, Sītā, long may she live, . . .

King. Here is Sītā. Rāma, Lashmaṇa, and Sītā, but that is not the proper order.

Sumantra. What order then?

King. Rāma, Sītā, and Lakshmaṇa.

Let the maid of Mithilā stand betwixt those two. The forests are full of dangers, so shall she be well protected. (15)

Sumantra. As the king commands. Rāma, long life to him.

King. Here is Rāma.

Sumantra. Janaka's daughter, Sītā, long life to her.

King. Here is Sītā.

Sumantra. And Lakshmaṇa, long may he live.

King. Here is Lakshmaṇa. Rāma, Sītā, Lakshmaṇa, embrace me, my children!

If I may just touch Rāma once again, or even see him, I think

I may live like a dead man revived by ambrosia. (16)

Sumantra. At Śrīṅgavera they got out of the chariot and stood looking towards Ayodhyā. Bowing low they were about to send your Majesty a message.

Long they pondered something they would say, and their lips trembled with the words, but their throats were paralysed with tears and they went off into the forest without a word. (17)

King. What? Went off without a word. [*Goes off in a deeper swoon than before.*]

Sumantra. [*Anxiously.*] Bālāki, tell the ministers the king is in a hopeless state.

Chamberlain. Very well. [*Exit.*]

The two Queens. Take heart, your Majesty, take heart!

King. [*Recovering slightly.*]

Touch my arm, Kausalyā, I cannot see thee with mine eyes. My wits have wandered after Rāma, and are not yet returned. (18)

Oh Rāma, my son. Ever had I set my heart on the thought
That enthroning thee I should bless my people with a noble
king, and bidding thee bestow equal fortune on thy brothers.
I would pass hence to a forest grove, and now, alas! Kaikeyī
has changed all that in a single second. (19)

Sumantra, take word to Kaikeyī—

Rāma has gone. Be thou content—I am on the point of death.

Send swiftly for our son. Let the error bear its fruit. (20)

Sumantra. As the king commands.

King. [*Looking upwards.*] Ah! Here come the shades of my ancestors to comfort my burning heart for news of Rāma. Whom have we here?

[*Enter the Chamberlain.*]

Chamberlain. Victory to the king!

King. Some water.

Chamberlain. As the king commands. [*Exit and re-enters.*] Majesty, here is water.

King. [*Sips and looks off.*]

Here is Dilīpa, friend of the Lord of Immortals, here is the majestic Raghu, this is my father Aja. Why have you come?

It is time for me to dwell there with you. (21)

Rāma, Sītā, Lakshmaṇa, I am passing hence to the spirits of my ancestors. Great spirits, here I come!

[*Expires in a swoon.*]

[*Chamberlain throws a cloth over him.*]

All. Woe, woe, the king!

[*Exeunt omnes.*]

[END OF THE SECOND ACT.]

ACT III

INTERLUDE

[*Enter Sudhākāra.*]

Sudhākāra. [*Cleaning up.*] Well, now I have done what master Sambhavaka told me. I'll just have a nap. [*Goes to sleep.*]

[*Enter Attendant.*]

Attendant. [*Going up to the servant and striking him.*] Ah, you rascal! Why are n't you working? [*Strikes him again.*]

Sudhākāra. [*Waking up.*] Beat me, that's right!

Attendant. If I do beat you, what will you do?

Sudhākāra. Unluckily I don't have a thousand arms like Arjuna.

Attendant. What do you want a thousand arms for?

Sudhākāra. To kill you.

Attendant. Oh, you rascal! Now I'll thrash you to death. [*Strikes him repeatedly.*]

Sudhākāra. [*Blubbling.*] May I know, master, what is my fault?

Attendant. What, no fault of yours I suppose! Didn't I tell you all the harem ladies were coming here to-day, with the queen at their head? . . . coming here to this portrait gallery to see the statue of King Daśaratha, who went to heaven with a broken heart, because Prince Rāma lost the succession? Now what have you done about it?

Sudhākāra. Why look, master. I've cleaned out the pigeons' nests from the room inside. I've marked the walls with five-finger prints of beautiful sandal. I have decorated the doors by hanging up wreaths of flowers. I have strewn fresh sand. What then haven't I done?

Attendant. If that's so, go in peace. I will just let the Minister know everything is ready.

[*Exeunt ambo.*]

END OF THE INTERLUDE.

[*Enter Bharata in a chariot, and a charioteer.*]

Bharata. [*Eagerly.*] Driver, I have lived so long with my uncle, that I have no news. They say the king is very ill. Tell me then,

What disease afflicts my sire?

Charioteer. A great affliction of the heart.

Bharata. What do the physicians say?

Charioteer. Nay, the doctors are helpless in this case.

Bharata. Does he take his food and sleep?

Charioteer. He lies on the earth tasting nothing.

Bharata. Is there any hope?

Charioteer. Only destiny.

Bharata. My heart throbs; speed the car. (1)

Charioteer. As the prince commands! [*Accelerates the chariot.*]

Bharata. [*Acting the speed of the chariot.*] Ah, how swift the chariot moves! Those

Trees appear to race towards us, so swiftly is their range reduced by the motion of the chariot. The ground runs down into the hollow betwixt the wheels like an agitated stream. The single spokes cannot be seen for the speed, only solid circles. The dust raised by the steeds flies in front but cannot follow behind.¹ (2)

Charioteer. Prince, we must be nearing Ayodhyā, there is more moisture from the trees.²

Bharata. How my mind hurries ahead eager to see my kinsmen.

My head is bowed at my father's feet, lovingly, methinks, he raises me, my brethren hasten up to me, the mothers' tears bedew me. 'How well he looks! how tall and strong he's grown!' so say the servants complimenting me. I see it all, ~~my jests, my dress, my talk with Lakshmana.~~ (3)

Charioteer. [*Aside.*] Alas. How sad that the prince should enter Ayodhyā ignorant of the king's death and nursing hopeless expectations of the future. Although we know, we cannot tell him, for

Who will relate the triple bane, his father's death, his mother's lust of power, and the exile of his elder brother? (4)

[*Enter a soldier.*]

Soldier. Highness, greeting.

Bharata. Ah, good fellow, has Śatrughna come to meet me?

Soldier. The prince is on his way. But the preceptors say—

Bharata. What do they say?

Soldier. There is still half an hour in the regency of the Pleiades. After that you may enter Ayodhyā as Rohiṇī³ arrives.

Bharata. Very well. I have never disobeyed a preceptor's words. You may go.

Soldier. As the prince commands. [*Exit.*]

Bharata. Where shall I spend the time? Yes, I see; I will rest awhile

¹ L. S. prefers 'does not fall in front but only falls behind'.

means 'Beautiful trees being well-arranged'.

³ Ninth lunar asterism.

² *Sopāśnehatayā vṛkṣāṇām.* L. S. thinks it

in that temple which I see through the trees. That will serve the double purpose, worship and repose. And it is the proper custom to sit a moment before entering a town, so stop the chariot.

Charioteer. As the prince commands. [*Stops the chariot.*]

Bharata. [*Dismounting from the chariot.*] Charioteer, rest the horses in a quiet spot.

Charioteer. As the prince commands.

Bharata. [*Taking a few steps and looking round.*] Oblations are indicated by the fried grains and the flowers strewn by a pious hand. The walls are marked with five-finger prints of sandal. The doors are festooned with garlands. There is fresh sand on the ground. Is it something special at the turn of the moon, or daily piety? To what deity can the place belong? I see no external sign, neither weapon nor banner. Well, I will go in and find out. [*Entering and looking round.*] What exquisite carving in these sculptures! How lifelike they are. Though these statues represent deities they look just like men. Is this a glorification of the four deities? Nay, be they what they may, they delight my heart.

If they be deities it is right to bow the head, only a churl would worship them without a verse of praise. (5)

[*Enter the Keeper.*]

Keeper. Hullo! Who is this that has gone into the gallery while I was engaged on my own affairs, after finishing my official duties? He strongly resembles the statues. Well, I will go in and find out.

[*Enters the gallery.*]

Bharata. Salutation.

Keeper. No, no, do not worship them.

Bharata. Oh, sir, say not so!

Is there something you should tell me? Why is this special prohibition maintained? Is it tyranny of rules? (6)

Keeper. Those are not the reasons why I forbade you, but I would not have a brahman worship, thinking they were gods. For they are of the warrior caste.

Bharata. So! Warriors, you say? Then what are their names?

Keeper. Sons of Ikshvāku.

Bharata. [*Joyfully.*] Sons of Ikshvāku! So these are the rulers of Ayodhyā.

These are they that rallied with the Gods at the destruction of the Demon city. These are they that by their good deeds pass to Indra's realm with the subjects of the country and the town. These are they that hold the whole world won by

the might of their arms. These are they that Death so long sought an excuse for not removing. (7)

Oh, what a great privilege chance has given me! Tell me, who is this noble king?

Keeper. This is Dilipa, who kindled the lamp of sacred law, and founded the rite of universal conquest that bestows all jewels.

Bharata. Salutations to the devotee of *dharma*. And who is this great king?

Keeper. This is Raghu, at whose rising and sleeping many thousands of brahmans chanted auspicious hymns.

Bharata. Ah, death is powerful indeed to over-pass that protection. Salutation to him that enriched the brahmans with the fruits of sovereignty. And who is this?

Keeper. That is Aja, who gave up the burden of his realm from grief at separation from his beloved and soothed his sorrow in the purifications of constant rites.

Bharata. Salutations to him of such praiseworthy penance. [*Looks at Daśaratha's statue and becomes troubled.*] My mind is confused with awe. I have not grasped it clearly. Tell me who is this?

Keeper. This is Dilipa.

Bharata. The great grandfather of the king. Proceed.

Keeper. The royal Raghu.

Bharata. The grandfather of the king. Yes?

Keeper. The royal Aja.

Bharata. The father of my dear father. What? Once more.

Keeper. This is Dilipa, this Raghu, and this Aja.

Bharata. Good sir, one question. Do they put up statues of living kings?

Keeper. Oh no, only of the dead.

Bharata. Then I bid you farewell.

Keeper. Stay. Why dost thou not question me of this other statue, that of Daśaratha, who yielded up both life and realm as a bridal fee? (8)

Bharata. Alas, my father. [*Falls down in a swoon and then recovers.*]

Oh, my heart, be thou content with the truth of thy suspicions. Learn now of my sire's decease and for a moment be thou calm. If this base term 'a bridal fee' touches me and it be true, then this my body must be cleansed—with fire. (9)

Noble sir,

Keeper. 'Noble sir'? that is the greeting used by princes of the royal blood. Can you be Bharata, Kaikeyi's son?

Bharata. Why yes, I am Bharata, the son of Daśaratha—not of Kaikeyi.

Keeper. Then excuse me if I leave you.

Bharata. Stay. Tell me the rest.

Keeper. No escape! Then listen. King Daśaratha is no more. Why Rāma went away to the forests with Sītā and Lakshmaṇa, I do not know.

Bharata. What do you say? My noble brother gone to the forest?
[*Goes off in a deeper swoon.*]

Keeper. Oh prince, take heart, be brave!

Bharata. [*Reviving.*]

I find Ayodhyā is a wilderness abandoned by my father and my brothers, as a man tormented by thirst hastens to a stream and finds it all dried up. (10)

Noble sir, it will brace my mind to hear the tale in full. So tell me all, concealing nothing.

Keeper. Harken then. The king was about to consecrate Rāma when your mother said—

Bharata. Hold.

She said, 'Remember the bridal forfeit and let my son be king'. Then encouraged by his patience she addressed my elder brother, 'Go thou, my son, to the forest'. When he saw him dressed in bark the king came to an unhappy end. And all the blame the people justly cast on me. (11) [*Faints away.*]
[*Voice behind the scene.*]

Out of the way, sirs, out of the way!

Keeper. [*Looking behind.*] Ah!

Here come the queens, just in time, as the prince has swooned. For the touch of a mother's hand is like a handful of water to the parched. (12)

[*Enter the queens and Sumantra.*]

Sumantra. This way, ladies.

This is that statue-gallery of our king, the height whereof surpasses palaces. Here may travellers resort, without obeisance, without the guidance of custodians. (13)

[*Enters and looks round.*]

Oh, ladies, do not enter.

For here lies one like the king in his youthful days.

Keeper. Mistake him not, but take him, for this is Bharata. (14) [*Exit.*]

Queens. [*Approaching hastily.*] Oh, Bharata, my child.

Bharata. [*Reviving somewhat.*] Noble sir.

Sumantra. Victory to the Ki— [*Breaks off sadly.*] Ah, how like the voice. It sounds as though the king's statue was speaking.

Bharata. How are my lady mothers now?

Queens. Child, as you see. [*Remove their veils.*]

Sumantra. Ladies, restrain your emotion.

Bharata. [*Looking at Sumantra.*] So intimate on all occasions,¹ that tells me something. Tell me, old man, are you Sumantra?

Sumantra. Yes, Prince. I am.

Pursued by the evils of longevity, disgraced by my ingratitude,
I still live on, though that king has passed away. The driver
of an empty chariot. (15)

Bharata. Alas, poor old man. [*Getting up.*]

I want you to tell me, old gentleman, which lady should I first address.

Sumantra. Certainly. This is Prince Rāma's mother, Queen Kausalyā.

Bharata. Mother, I that am innocent salute you.

Kausalyā. My child, I wish you freedom from distress.

Bharata. [*Aside.*] That implies a reproach. [*Aloud.*] I thank you. And then—

Sumantra. This is Prince Lakshmana's mother, Queen Sumitrā.

Bharata. Mother, I that am forestalled by Lakshmana salute you.

Sumantra. My child, I wish you glory.

Bharata. Why, mother, I shall strive for it. I thank you. And so—

Sumantra. This is your own mother.

Bharata. (*Rising angrily.*) Oh, wicked woman!

Betwixt this my mother and that one thou lookest not well, like
a foul stream slipping between the Ganges and the Jamnā. (16)

Kaikeyī. My child! What have I done?

Bharata. What have you done, you say?

Thou hast covered me with infamy, and my elder brother with
bark. Thou has brought the king to his death too soon,² and
all Ayodhyā to endless lamentation. Thou hast sent Lakshmana
to dwell with beasts, and mothers doting on their sons to dwell
with sorrow. Thou hast laden thy daughter-in-law with the
toils of travel, and thyself with harsh words of reproach. (17)

Kausalyā. My child, you are versed in all the rules of etiquette, why
don't you salute your mother?

Bharata. 'Mother', say you? Nay, lady, you are my mother, and you
do I salute.

Kausalyā. No, no, she is your mother.

Bharata. She used to be, but not now. Look you, lady,

Sons cease to be sons when they cease to love, with virtue

¹ Lit. 'your proximity (on the occasion)
of all their behaviour', i. e. even when the
ladies remove their veils.

² *grha-mṛtyu*, 'house-death', i. e. death
while still a householder and not arrived
at the later stages.

turned to sin. I will establish a new law in the world that
a mother be no mother for perfidy to her lord. (18)

Kaikeyī. I said what I said, my child, to make the king keep his word.

Bharata. What did you say?

Kaikeyī. 'Let my son be king.'

Bharata. And what else but a son is my elder brother to you?

Is he not the son legitimate of my sire? Is he not the heir in
succession? Did he not adore his brothers? Did the people
disapprove? (19)

Kaikeyī. Shall a woman be questioned for wanting her bridal fee?

Bharata. Thou sendest him on foot with his bride, his royal
splendour replaced by bark, and biddest him dwell in the
forest. Is that too written in the bridal bond? (20)

Kaikeyī. I will explain, my child, at the proper time and place.

Bharata. If thou wast greedy of shame, why bring in my name?
What profit from kingship didst thou desire? What would
the king not have given? Or didst thou but crave the title
'Mother of the King'? Speak truly, madam, was not my elder
brother thy son? (21)

The deed was evil, madam.

In thy lust for power thou hadst no thought for the king or
his life. His eldest son didst thou send away to wander in the
forest. Alas! the Creator has made thy heart as hard as
adamant, that it was not broken at the sight of Sitā dressed
in bark. (22)

Sumantra. Prince, here are Vasishṭha and Vāmadeva and the people.
They approach your Highness with preparation for your consecration
and would have you know:—

As cattle without a herdsman are unprotected and soon de-
stroyed, so perishes a people that has no king. (23)

Bharata. Let the people follow me.

Sumantra. Whither away, your Highness, without waiting for the
consecration?

Bharata. 'Consecration', say you? Bestow it on her ladyship here.

Sumantra. Where is your Highness going?

Bharata. Where Lakshmaṇa's friend abides. Without him Ayo-
dhyā is not Ayodhyā. For Ayodhyā can only be where the
scion of Raghu dwells. (24)

[*Exeunt omnes.*]

ACT IV

[*In Ayodhyā.*]

INTERLUDE

[*Enter two Maids.*]

Vijayā. Nandanikā, my dear, do tell me: Is it true that when Queen Kausalyā and all the other ladies went to see the gallery of statues, they saw Prince Bharata in that very place? I, unluckily, had to remain at the door.

Nandanikā. Yes, my dear, we were so curious, and we saw the king's son Bharata.

Vijayā. What did the prince say to the queen his mother?

Nandanikā. Say to her? He won't so much as look at her.

Vijayā. Dear, dear, it's a bad business. By doing prince Rāma out of the succession through greed of power she decreed her own widowhood. The people are going to rack and ruin. She is cruel indeed. 'Twas a wicked thing to do.

Nandanikā. Besides, my dear, the prince wouldn't wait for the consecration the people had all ready, but went off to Rāma's penance-grove.

Vijayā. [*Disappointed.*] Oh! So the prince has gone. Come Nandanikā, let us find the queen.

[*Exeunt ambo.*]

END OF THE INTERLUDE.

[*Enter Bharata in a chariot with Sumantra and a charioteer.*]

Bharata. Now that the king has gone to heaven with his virtuous deeds behind him, I set forth, followed by the streaming tears of citizens, to find in the wide penance-groves that second moon in the world that we call Rāma. (1)

Sumantra. Here is Prince Bharata.

Son of the king who crushed the pride of Indra and the demons, grandson of the king who devoted his wealth to ritual, brother of Rāma so loving to his father and the darling of the world, he fares forth by the selfsame road as Rāma. (2)

Bharata. Old gentleman!

Sumantra. Prince, I am here.

Bharata. Where is his highness, my elder brother Rāma? Where is that image¹ of the king? that shining example of the steadfast? that reproach to Kaikeyī with her lust for power? Where is that vessel of glory, true son of the king and devoted to the truth?

Him do I long to see that gave up his fortune to please my mother, he is my greatest deity. (3)

Sumantra. Here, prince, in this hermitage.

Here dwell the glorious Rāma, Sītā, and Lakshmaṇa, embodiments of truth, virtue, and devotion. (4)

Bharata. Then stop the chariot.

Charioteer. As the prince commands. [*Does so.*]

Bharata. [*Alighting from the chariot.*] Driver, rest the horses in a quiet place.

Charioteer. As the prince commands. [*Exit.*]

Bharata. Old sir, make the announcement, do!

Sumantra. What announcement, prince?

Bharata. The arrival of Bharata, son of greedy Kaikeyī.

Sumantra. Nay, prince, do not reproach your elders.

Bharata. Very good, it is not right to mention the faults of others. Then say that Bharata wishes to see them, he that has become the disgrace of the royal clan.

Sumantra. Nay, prince, I cannot say that. Rather I will simply say, Bharata has arrived'.

Bharata. No, no. Merely to mention my name would suggest I made no expiation. But are brahman-murderers announced by others? So stay, old gentleman. I will announce myself. Ho, there! make known to his Highness Rāghava, maintainer of his father's word,

There has arrived a cruel and ungrateful man, unrefined and violent, but full of devotion. Is he to stay or to go away? (5)

[*Enter Rāma with Lakshmaṇa and Sītā.*]

Rāma. [*Listening with delight.*] Lakshmaṇa, do you hear? And you, Princess of Videha, do you hear?

Whose voice is that, so like my sire's? Its tone is deeper than the thunder in the clouds. Making my heart surmise a kinsman, it is doubly welcome to my ears. (6)

Lakshmaṇa. Noble brother, the sound of this voice affects me too with a feeling of great respect as for a kinsman. For

This is a powerful voice, clear and steady, soft and mellow like that of an amorous bull. Melodious in tone and rapid with

¹ L. S. 'representative'.

easy breathing and with clear articulation of every sound, this voice rings out to free the world from fear.¹ (7)

Rāma. In any case it is not a stranger's voice. It seems to move my heart. Dear Lakshmaṇa, do find out whose it is.

Lakshmaṇa. As my brother bids. [*Steps around.*]

Bharata. Ah! Why does no one answer? Have they discovered that Bharata, Kaikeyi's son, has come?

Lakshmaṇa. [*Gazing at him.*] Why this is Rāma! No, no, it's only similarity.

His peerless countenance, lovely as the moon, is like my elder brother's. That broad chest that the god's foes have scarred with arrows resembles father's.

Circled with lustre, all splendour, a delight for the world to see, is he a king or the lord of gods, Madhusūdana himself? (8)

[*Catching sight of Sumantra.*] Oho, old gentleman!

Sumantra. Ha! Prince Lakshmaṇa.

Bharata. Yes, he is my elder brother. Noble sir, I salute you.

Lakshmaṇa. Welcome, welcome! Long may you live. [*Looking at Sumantra.*] Tell me good sir, who is this gentleman?

Sumantra. Prince,

Fourth from Raghu, from Aja third and second from thy illustrious sire, he is Prince Bharata, younger brother of that standard of the clan, that is thine own elder brother. (9)

Lakshmaṇa. Welcome, royal prince! Good health be yours, dear boy and long may you live.

May your valour equal that of kinsmen unsurpassed in might and courage, whose bows, so skilled in battles with fiends, were matched with thunderbolts. Like that king Raghu who spent his treasure on sacrifice, be thou a vessel of the most glorious qualities in the world. (10)

Bharata. I thank you.

Lakshmaṇa. Prince, stay here a moment. I will tell my brother you have come.

Bharata. Please tell him quickly, noble brother. For I am longing to salute him without delay.

Lakshmaṇa. Very well. [*Goes up to Rāma.*]

Noble brother, greeting!

¹ Lit. 'Melodious in the throat and forceful with the passages unobstructed in the chest, with clearness of articulation of the

several sounds, as it comes to each organ it issues to give, as it were, security to the four castes.'

This is your well-beloved brother Bharata, so affectionate to his brethren. In him your own form stands reflected as in a mirror. (11)

Rāma. Dear Lakshmaṇa, has Bharata arrived ?

Lakshmaṇa. Why, yes.

Rāma. Lady of Mithilā, open wide your eyes to look at Bharata.

Sītā. What, my lord, is Bharata here ?

Rāma. Yes, Princess,

To-day I am to learn how hard a thing my father did. However great a man's affection for his son, a brother's love is no less. (12)

Lakshmaṇa. Shall the prince enter, sir ?

Rāma. My dear Lakshmaṇa, do you want my order even for this, your heart's desire ? Go bring in the prince at once with honour.

Lakshmaṇa. As my brother bids.

Rāma. Nay, stay.

Let the princess go herself to show him honour, like a mother, whose heart is melting for her son, her eyes shedding a shower of joyful tears like a blue-lotus leaf wet with dew. (13)

Sītā. As my lord commands. [*Rises, steps round and sees Bharata.*]

So then, my lord has just come out himself ! No, no. It is only a similarity.

Sumantra. Ah, the bride !

Bharata. Ah, this is her Highness, King Janaka's daughter.

This is that glory in woman's form gotten on a field by the plough as a manifestation of King Janaka's austerities. (14)

Lady, Bharata salutes you.

Sītā. [*Aside.*] Not only his looks, his voice, too, is the same.

[*Aloud.*] Dear brother, long life to you.

Bharata. I thank you.

Sītā. Come, dear, and delight your brother's heart.

Sumantra. Let the prince go in.

Bharata. What wilt thou do now, old sir ?

Sumantra. Later I shall see. Since the king went to heaven this is my first glimpse of Rāma now he knows the truth. (15)

Bharata. So be it. [*Approaching Rāma.*] Noble brother, Bharata greets you.

Rāma. [*Joyfully.*] Welcome, welcome ! royal prince. Long life and health be thine,

Spread out thy breast as wide as the panel of a door and embrace me in thy two stalwart arms. Lift up this face lovely

as the autumn moon, bring delight to this my body burnt by calamity. (16)

Bharata. I thank you.

Sumantra. [*Approaching.*] Long live the prince !

Rāma. Alas, old gentleman,

Erstwhile there was a king that with his armies mounted to the sky at the moment of assault in the battle of Gods and Demons with aerial cars as swift as theirs. He was renowned for it and pointed out by many: 'There goes the hero.' But now that the glorious king has left the body to dwell in heaven with the shades of his royal ancestors, what comfort can he find therein deprived of you, so devoted and so beloved ? (17)

Sumantra. [*Sorrowfully.*]

For living through this varied dreadful woe, the king's demise, your own exile, Bharata's distress, and the helpless state of the royal house, my old age seems guilty of a string of crimes. (18)

Sītā. Oh, my lord, ere your tears are dry, this old man is making you weep again.

Rāma. Lady of Mithilā, lo, I control myself. Dear Lakshmaṇa, bring water.

Lakshmaṇa. As my brother bids.

Bharata. Nay, brother, it is not proper. It is my turn to serve and I will go. [*Takes the pitcher. Exit and re-enters.*] Here is water.

Rāma. [*Sipping.*] Lady of Mithilā, Lakshmaṇa has lost his occupation.

Sītā. My lord, he also should attend on you.

Rāma. True, let Lakshmaṇa serve me here and Bharata in Ayodhyā.

Bharata. Oh, please, my noble brother,

I will stay here in the body and over there in action. Your very name will protect the realm. (19)

Rāma. My dear Bharata, say not so.

I came to the forest at my sire's behest, not from pride, dear lad, or fear or confusion. Our house, I tell thee, keeps its word.

Wilt thou then start on a lower path ? (20)

Sumantra. Where now is the consecration water to rest ?

Rāma. Where my mother has directed.

Bharata. May it please my noble brother, do not strike me on the raw.

My lineage, worthy brother, is the same as thine. Thy father so resolute and wise was my father too. A man cannot be blamed

for his mother's fault, great hero. See, kindly one, how Bharata is distressed. (21)

Sītā. My lord, the words of Bharata are piteous. What think you?

Rāma. Lady of Mithilā,

I am thinking of the king that passed to the world of the gods and never saw the splendid qualities of this son of his. Ah, fie upon fate if it can overcome the best of men after getting such a son, a treasure-house of virtues! (22)

Dear Bharata,

'Tis sooth I am content with thee, and thy soul is clear of stain. Thy qualities so manifest have won me and incline my will to what you say. But it is not fitting thou shouldst make that great king's word prove false. Having obtained a son like thee should thy father be dubbed a liar? (23)

Bharata. I will abide at thy feet, O king, until thy vow has been fulfilled.

Rāma. Nay, a king must gain success by his own good deeds. My curse is on thee if thou dost not protect thy realm. (24)

Bharata. Alas, to that there is no answer. So be it. On one condition will I maintain the kingdom.

Rāma. What is the condition?

Bharata. I want you to resume thy kingdom, given in trust to me, at the end of the fourteen years.

Rāma. Agreed.

Bharata. Bear witness all of you, you brother, you, lady, and you, old gentleman.

All. Yes, we are witnesses.

Bharata. Noble brother, I crave another boon.

Rāma. What would you have, dear boy? What can I give? What can I do for you?

Bharata. Vouchsafe to me who bow my head, those two sandals thou dost wear. I shall be their vassal till thou comest to fulfil thy duty. (25)

Rāma. [*Aside.*] Ah! What little glory I had attained at length, Bharata has acquired it all to-day in no time at all. (26)

Sītā. My lord. Please grant Bharata his first request.

Rāma. So be it. Dear brother, take them.

Bharata. I thank you. [*Takes them.*] Noble brother, let me pour on them the consecration water.

Rāma. Old gentleman, let all be done as Bharata desires.

Sumantra. As the prince commands.

Bharata. [*Aside.*] Ah,

Now my kin can trust me, now can the people love me, and I can hold my head up in the world. Now am I the virtuous beloved son of the deceased monarch. I am honoured by my excellent brothers, a vessel of great glory, talked of in the conversation of good men, an object of affection to all who obtain what they desire. (27)

Rāma. Dear Bharata, a kingdom should not be neglected even for a moment. So for success you should return this very day.

Sītā. Oh, must Prince Bharata go this very day?

Rāma. Affection must be restrained. This very day must the prince return to power.

Bharata. Noble brother, I shall depart this very day.

The burghers will be waiting in the city hoping to see thee: I shall content them by showing them thy favour. (28)

Sumantra. Great prince, what am I to do now?

Rāma. Look after the prince, old gentleman, like the king himself.

Sumantra. If I live, I shall do my best.

Rāma. Dear Bharata, mount the chariot in my presence.

Bharata. As my brother bids. [*Gets into the chariot.*]

Rāma. Come, Maithilī, and you, dear Lakshmaṇa. We will see Bharata to the gate of the hermitage.

[*Exeunt omnes.*]

END OF THE FOURTH ACT.

ACT V

[*Enter Sītā and a female ascetic.*]

Sītā. Lady, I have swept up the votive blossoms scattered through the hermitage. The gods have been honoured with such means as a grove affords. Now, until my husband returns, I will tend these young trees, giving them some water.

Ascetic. Be there no let or hindrance therein.

[*Enter Rāma.*]

Rāma. [*Sorrowfully.*] Deserting fair Ayodhyā forsaken by the king and me, Bharata, that treasure-house of virtues, came here to me presenting all the gear for my coronation: but I have sent him back, to guard the realm. All alone, alas, he has to bear the heavy burden of a king. (1)

[*Reflecting.*] It must be so. To soothe so keen a grief I must see the princess of Mithilā, my true mate in every situation. Where now has she gone? [*Stepping and looking around.*] Ah, the roots of these trees have just been watered. That shows she has not gone far. For

The water is still swirling with its bubbles in the trench; the thirsty birds alighting are not yet drinking the muddy stream; as their holes are flooded out, dragged insects are crawling to dry ground. The trees appear to have new girdles with the wet rings where the water sinks at their roots. (2)

[*Looking round.*] Ah, here is the lady of Videha—alas!

That hand of hers that erstwhile was wearied by a mirror, now feels no fatigue in carrying a water jar. Alas, the forest makes delicate ladies as hard as creepers. (3)

[*Approaching.*] Maithilī, how goes it with your task?

Sītā. Oh, it is my lord! Greeting, my lord.

Rāma. If your duty will allow, please sit down.

Sītā. As my lord commands. [*Sits down.*]

Rāma. You look to me as if you wished to say something, Maithilī. What is it?

Sītā. My lord's face is pale as if his heart was troubled by some sorrow. Why is that?

Rāma. There is ground for my grief, Maithilī.

My body is smitten by the shafts of Fate, the wound in my heart remains the same. Thereon beat the blows of sorrow's darts of manifold result again and again. (4)

Sītā. What is the trouble, my lord?

Rāma. To-morrow is the anniversary of my reverend father and the memorial rites¹ must be performed. The shades require oblations to be made exactly as ordained by the sacred law. I am sad to think I cannot conform. Yet,

As they know my present state they will be content with anything, and yet I wish I could perform this worship in a manner worthy of Rāma and his sire. (5)

Sītā. But Bharata, my lord, will perform the rite in royal style, and you in your present state will do it with water and with fruits. That will father esteem the more.

Rāma. Ah Maithilī,

When father sees the fruits placed on the sacrificial grass with

¹ Lit. Śrāddha ceremonies, offerings to the shades of the departed at certain intervals.

our own hands, 'twill remind him of our exile in the forest,
and he will weep even in the other world. (6)

[*Enter Rāvaṇa disguised as an ascetic.*]

Rāvaṇa. Ha, here am I,

Of a spirit uncontrolled, I adopt this virtuous guise to cheat
the son of Raghu, whom I hate for killing Khara. I have set out
with full intent to carry off the daughter of king Janaka, like
a stream of oblations deficient in fitting word and accent.¹ (7)

[*Turning round and looking down.*]

This is the entrance to Rāma's hermitage. I will descend. [*Descends.*]
I shall behave like a guest. I am a guest. Holla! Who is there?

Rāma. [*Listening.*] Welcome to a guest.

Rāvaṇa. His good looks are well matched by his voice.

Rāma. [*Catching sight of him.*] Ah! a holy man. Reverend sir,
I salute you.

Rāvaṇa. Good health to you.

Rāma. Pray be seated here, sir.

Rāvaṇa. [*Aside.*] I feel as if he were ordering me about. [*Aloud.*]
Very well. [*Sits down.*]

Rāma. Maithilī, bring water for the feet of this holy man.

Sītā. As my lord commands. [*Exit and re-enters.*] Here is water.

Rāma. Wait upon this holy man.

Sītā. As my lord commands.

Rāvaṇa. [*Apprehensive lest his disguise be revealed.*] Let be, let be.

She alone is an Arundhatī² among the women of the world,
for they name thee with respect as her spouse. (8)

Rāma. Then bring the water here, I will wait on him myself.

Rāvaṇa. So, I may avoid the shadow and not escape the thing itself.
Speech suffices to entertain a guest. I am honoured. Pray be seated.

Rāma. Very well. [*Sits down.*]

Rāvaṇa. [*Aside.*] Now I must behave like a brahman.

[*Aloud.*] I belong to the Kāśyapa clan. I have studied the Veda with
all its branches, the code of Manu, the Yogaśāstra of Maheśvara,
Bṛihaspati's Science of Politics, the Logic of Medhātithi and Pracetas'
scripture on memorial rites.

Rāma. What do you say? 'Scripture on memorial rites'?

Rāvaṇa. Without a word of the other scriptures you show an interest
in that of the memorial rites. Why so?

¹ And therefore liable to be stolen by
evil spirits.

² Arundhatī wife of Vasishṭha and small
star in the Great Bear.

Rāma. Reverend sir, now that I have lost my father that is the text for me.

Rāvaṇa. Do not hesitate. Ask me what you will.

Rāma. With what can I satisfy the shades at the time of oblations?

Rāvaṇa. Everything given gladly expresses homage.¹

Rāma. Ay, sir, and what is given without respect is rejected. But I am asking you for particulars.

Rāvaṇa. Hearken. For humans are prescribed, *darbha* grass among the plants, sesamum among the medicines, of vegetables pulse, of fish the carp, of birds the crane, of beasts the cow, the rhinoceros, or . . .

Rāma. 'Or' you say, sir, so there is an alternative.

Rāvaṇa. There is, but it can only be obtained by might.

Rāma. Reverend sir, that is my intention.

Both are at hand that shall accomplish it, the bow when penance flags and penance when the bow is slack. (9)

Rāvaṇa. They exist. They live in the Himālayas.

Rāma. In the Himālayas? Proceed—

Rāvaṇa. They are deer called golden-sides. They live on the seventh summit of Himālaya. They are swift as the wind and their backs as dark as beryl.² They drink the water of the Ganges where it falls on the head of Śiva before them. With these it was the great seers like Vaikhānasa, Vālakhilya, and Naimiṣiya performed their memorial rites, killing them and bringing them in by the power of thought.

Appeased by these, the shades obtain full profit of their sons.

Leaving old-age behind they mount resplendent up to heaven.

Like gods they come to dwell in aerial cars and are drawn no longer by transient objects. (10)

Rāma. Lady of Mithilā,

Bid farewell to thy adopted children, the deer, the trees, the Vindhya forest, and thy friends thy beloved creepers. I am to dwell in the Himālayan groves coloured by the brilliant growth of healing herbs. (11)

Sitā. As my lord commands.

Rāvaṇa. Son of Kausalyā, do not expect too much. They are not visible to mortal eyes.

Rāma. Do they dwell, sir, in the Himālaya?

Rāvaṇa. Why, yes.

Rāma. Then look you, sir,

Either the Himālaya will show me the golden deer or split by

¹ What is given with *Śraddhā* (faith, desire) is *Śraddham*.

² Cats-eye.

the force of my shaft, 'twill share the fate of the Krauñca mountain.¹ (12)

Rāvaṇa. [*Aside.*] Oh, his pride is intolerable. [*Aloud.*] Aha! Here comes something like a flash of lightning, O Son of Kausalyā; the Himālaya honours you even here. This is the Deer with Golden Sides.

Rāma. This good fortune is due to you, holy man.

Sītā. Happily my lord is fortunate.

Rāma. Nay,

This is my father's luck, it comes of its own accord. He is worthy of the offering. Speak to Lakshmaṇa, Maithilī. (13)

Sītā. My lord, you sent him to meet the chief of the hermitage returning from a pilgrimage.

Rāma. Then I will go myself.

Sītā. What shall I do, my lord?

Rāma. Attend upon this reverend gentleman.

Sītā. As my lord commands, [*Exit Rāma.*]

Rāvaṇa. Ah, there is Rāma running to obtain a proper offering. And now intent upon his worship, he sees the running deer and draws his bow.

How strong he is, how brave! How great his spirit and his speed! Well may the world be pervaded by that one little word of 'Rāma'. (14)

The deer in a single bound has passed beyond the range of his arrows and entered a thicket in the forest.

Sītā. [*Aside.*] I am parted from my lord and now I am afraid.

Rāvaṇa. [*Aside.*]

Rāma removed by guile, I shall carry off from the hermitage the weeping damsel Sītā left lonely like an offering devoid of sacred stanzas. (15)

Sītā. I will just go into the hut. [*Begins to go.*]

Rāvaṇa. [*Taking his own form.*] Sītā, stay.

Sītā. [*Fearfully.*] Oh! Who is this?

Rāvaṇa. Dost thou not know me?

I conquered in the battle Indra and the other gods with hosts of demons. When I saw my sister's² mutilation and heard of both my brothers slain I beguiled Rāma with my ruses; he is matchless in his strength, but his wits are dulled by pride; and I have come to carry thee off, large-eyed lady—and I am Rāvaṇa. (16)

Sita. Oh! Rāvaṇa! [*Moves away.*]

¹ Split by the God of War.

² Śūrpaṇakhā 'With nails like winnow-

ing fans', Rāvaṇa's sister who was mutilated by Lakshmaṇa.

Rāvaṇa. Ah, once in Rāvaṇa's view, whither will you go?

Sītā. My lord! Save, save me. Lakshmaṇa, help! help!

Rāvaṇa. Sītā, listen to my heroic deeds.

Indra did I smash and made Kubera tremble. Soma dragged I in the dust and thrashed the child of the Sun. Ho! a fig for them. They're frightened gods that live in heaven. Blessed is the earth where Sītā dwells. (17)

Sītā. My lord, protect me! Lakshmaṇa, save me, save me!

Rāvaṇa. Run to Rāma for protection or to Lakshmaṇa, or, if thou wilt, to Daśaratha the king in heaven. What boot these coward's words? Can fawns assail a tiger? (18)

Sītā. Save me, my lord! Help! Lakshmaṇa, help!

Rāvaṇa. Why this lament, large-eyed lady? Count me as thy lord. This Rāma with all his mighty strength and a host of gods to help him is no match for me. (19)

Sītā. [*Angrily.*] Thou art accursed.

Rāvaṇa. Ha, ha, ha! See the fire in the virtuous wife.

When I sped rapidly aloft the sun's rays could not burn me.

Now her few words, 'Thou art accursed', make me burn. (20)

Sītā. Save me, my lord, save me!

Rāvaṇa. [*Seizing Sītā.*] Ho there! ye hermits that dwell in Janasthāna, hearken to my words.

Ten-necks is making off perforce with Sītā. If Rāma cares ought for a warrior's role let him show his powers. (21)

Sītā. Save me, my lord, save me!

Rāvaṇa. [*Stepping and looking around.*] Oho! here is the Vulture King¹ rushing at me, with his savage beak, uprooting the forest thickets with the hurricane raised by his wings. Ha! stop now!

Drawing my blade I slice off both thy wings. From the wounds spouts out the gore to drench thy body. So send I thee to the abode of Death.

[*Exeunt ambo.*]

END OF THE FIFTH ACT.

¹ Jaṭāyu.

ACT VI

[*In the Forest.*]

INTERLUDE

[*Enter two old ascetics.*]**Both.** Help! help!**First Old Man.** Here is Sītā being overpowered and haled away by one who is dark in hue as a garland of blue lotus, who laughs with teeth gleaming white like lotus stalks. She is like a gazelle taken by the lord of nocturnal roamers wandering at dead of night. (1)**Second Old Man.** Here is the Princess of Videha, Struggling like a serpent maiden, shaken like a flowering creeper she is borne away perforce by the wicked Rāvaṇa, away as it were perfection from the penance grove. (2)**Both.** Help! help!**First Old Man.** [*Looking upwards.*] Ah! at the very moment of my cry the Vulture King has soared into the air to pay his debt to Daśaratha and challenge Rāvaṇa, 'Whither away while I remain'?**Second Old Man.** Here is Rāvaṇa returning, his eyes bulging with rage**First Old Man.** That is Rāvaṇa.**Second Old Man.** That's Jaṭāyu.**Both.** Oh, the duel in the sky begins.**First Old Man.** Kāśyapa, Kāśyapa, see how powerful is this lord of carrion eaters.

With his wings he flies around manœuvring for the valorous duel, with his mandibles well worn and sharp¹ he strikes unmoving to enclose his foe. With talons sharp as iron hooks he tears the horrid entrails from his breast, as a rock is torn from a crag roughly split by the facets of a thunderbolt. (3)

Second Old Man. Alas! the enraged Rāvaṇa has wounded the carrion king on the right pinion.**Both.** Alack! The noble vulture falls.**First Old Man.** Woe, woe, this noble Jaṭāyu,

After an effort supreme worthy of his valour, recking no more of his foe than of a pet peacock and shaking the bright glory of the Goblin King, he has come to grief like a forest tree crushed by a lordly tusker. (4)

¹ Epithet transferred to *sameteṣaṇam*.

Both. May he go to heaven !

First Old Man. Come, Kāśyapa, let us report this news to the Rāghava Prince.

Second Man. Yes, that were best.

[*Exeunt ambo.*]

END OF THE INTERLUDE.

[*In Ayodhyā.*]

[*Enter the Chamberlain.*]

Chamberlain. Who's here ? Who guards the Golden Gate ?

[*Enter Portress.*]

Portress. I, sir, Vijayā. What's to do ?

Chamberlain. Take word at once, Vijayā, to Prince Bharata, that the venerable Sumantra, who was sent to Janasthāna to see Rāma, has returned.

Portress. Was he successful, sir ?

Chamberlain. Madam, I do not know.

My mind misgave me straight when I saw him returned with
a face all wilted by the fire of grief within his breast. (5)

Portress. I am disturbed to hear it, sir.

Chamberlain. What are you standing here for, madam. Tell him quickly.

Portress. I am off to tell him, sir. [*Exit.*]

Chamberlain. [*Looking round.*] Ah, there is his Highness the Prince Bharata. He is coming this way, clad in bark dress, with his forehead tawny with a varied mass of matted locks, moved no doubt with curiosity at Sumantra's return. He is

The sum of famous qualities, death to his opponents, ornament
of the Solar race, peer of the chief of gods. Glorious protector
by command of all the earth, he stalks along like a magnificent
young elephant. (6)

[*Enter Bharata and the Portress.*]

Bharata. So, Vijayā, the venerable Sumantra has returned.

A former time I went myself to see my elder brother and
I returned with a favour and a promise, and now has the
venerable Sumantra come after seeing Rāma, delight of the
people's eyes, their hearts and minds. (7)

Chamberlain. [*Approaching.*] Greeting, prince !

Bharata. Where is the venerable Sumantra ?

Chamberlain. At the Golden Gate.

Bharata. Then bring him in at once.

Chamberlain. As the prince commands. [*Exit.*]

[*Enter Sumantra and the Portress.*]

Sumantra. [*Sorrowfully.*] Alas! Alas!

I have seen the king's demise and the ruin of his son, and now
I hear of the disappearance of the princess. Calamities fall on
my old age as in a string. (8)

Portress. [*To Sumantra.*] Come this way, sir. There is the prince.
Go up to him.

Sumantra. [*Approaching.*] Greeting, prince!

Bharata. Well, old gentleman, have you seen that revelation to the
world of filial affection? Have you seen the double of Arundhati's
good character? Have you seen that model brother a voluntary exile
in the forest?

[*Sumantra remains deep in thought.*]

Portress. The prince is speaking to you.

Sumantra. What, to me, madam?

Bharata. [*Aside.*] His fatigue is great indeed. His mind is wandering
in his distress. [*Aloud.*] Have you returned without completing the
journey?

Sumantra. Oh, prince, I set out for Janasthāna at your bidding to
see Rāma. How could I return while on the way?

Bharata. Are they hiding then from anger or from shame?

Sumantra. Oh, prince!

Whence anger in the well-controlled? Or shame for those
whose hearts are pure? Yet I saw the hermitage empty, bereft
of them. (9)

Bharata. Did you learn where they had gone?

Sumantra. There is a colony of forest-dwellers¹ at a place called
Kishkindha. That's where I heard they had gone.

Bharata. Alas, apes know nothing of human distinctions. They must be
living in great difficulty.

Sumantra. Prince, animals also recognize their obligations.

Bharata. How so, old gentleman?

Sumantra. When Sugrīva was thrust from his kingdom by his
elder brother Vāli, and dwelt on a mountain robbed of his
wife, Rāma relieved him of trouble like his own. (10)

Bharata. Trouble like his own? What do you mean by that, old man?

Sumantra. [*Aside.*] I have given it all away. [*Aloud.*] Oh, nothing,
prince. I meant they both had lost their sovereignty.

¹ Meaning 'monkeys'.

Bharata. What are you hiding? By the feet of his late Majesty be you accursed if you do not speak the truth.

Sumantra. No way out. Listen then,

In guarding the saints there was a feud with a powerful demon.

Then resorting to a ruse Rāvaṇa abducted Sītā. (11)

Bharata. Abducted Sītā? [*Goes off in a swoon.*]

Sumantra. Oh, prince, take heart.

Bharata. [*Coming to himself.*] Alas! alas!

Bereft of sire and kin, enduring great affliction in the forest,
my noble brother is now parted from his spouse as in the sky
a clouded moon is robbed of its light. (12)

Oh! What shall I do now? I have it. Follow me, old gentleman.

Sumantra. As the prince commands.

[*Both step round.*]

Sumantra. Nay, prince, not this way. Here are the chambers of the queens.

Bharata. My business is even here. Ho there! Who keeps the door?

[*Enter Portress.*]

Portress. Hail, prince! I am Vijayā.

Bharata. Inform her Majesty that I am here.

Portress. Which queen shall I tell?

Bharata. She that wished me king.

Portress. [*Aside.*] Hullo! What? Can it be? [*Aloud.*] Very well, master. [*Exit.*]

[*Re-enters with Kaikeyī.*]

Kaikeyī. Has Bharata come to see me, Vijayā?

Portress. Yes, mistress. Old Sumantra has come back from Prince Rāma. Prince Bharata wants to see you with him.

Kaikeyī. [*Aside.*] With what wounding words will Bharata reproach me?

Portress. Mistress, shall the prince come in?

Kaikeyī. Go, bring him in.

Portress. Very well, mistress. [*Stepping round to Bharata.*] Greeting, prince! Pray enter.

Bharata. Have you announced us, Vijayā?

Portress. Yes.

Bharata. Then let us go in.

[*They enter.*]

Kaikeyī. My child, Vijayā tells me Sumantra has come back from Rāma.

Bharata. And I have other pleasant news to tell your Majesty.

Kaikeyī. Then, child, we should send for Kausalyā and Sumitrā.

Bharata. No, it is not for them to hear.

Kaikeyī. [*Aside.*] What can it be? [*Aloud.*] Speak out, my son.
Bharata. Hearken.

There was one that yielded up the sovereignty and went at thy behest into the forest. His wife Sītā has been stolen. Are thy wishes now fulfilled? (13)

Kaikeyī. Eh?

Bharata. Alack, since thou camest as a bride to this house of brave high-minded warriors, it comes to pass that their women are molested. (14)

Kaikeyī. [*Aside.*] So be it, the time has come to tell him. [*Aloud.*] My son, you do not know of the curse upon the king.

Bharata. What? A curse upon the king?

Kaikeyī. Tell him the whole story, Sumantra.

Sumantra. As you wish. Listen, prince. Some time ago the king went out a-hunting. Now there was a blind sage who had a son that served the holy man like a pair of eyes. And the boy was filling his pitcher at a pond. And the king misled by the sound as of an elephant's trunk thought it was an elephant, and aiming an arrow at the sound he slew him.

Bharata. Slew him? Forgiveness on the sin! And then?

Sumantra. Then finding him in that plight,

That sooth-speaking sage when he made an end of weeping declared, 'Like me, sir, shalt thou perish through grief for thy son'. (15)

Bharata. Ah! This was terrible.

Kaikeyī. That was the cause, my son, that threw me into wrong, so that dear Rāma was exiled to the forest. 'Twas not through lust of power. The sage's curse was inexorable and could only be fulfilled by the exile of a son.

Bharata. But if the exile of one son was like another's, why was not I sent to the forest?

Kaikeyī. My child, you were staying at your uncle's house, you were in exile already.

Bharata. But, fourteen years? What did you mean by that?

Kaikeyī. Oh, my child, it was fourteen *days* I meant to say, but in the confusion of my mind the fourteen years slipped out.

Bharata. True wisdom lies in complete consideration. Is this known to the preceptors?

Sumantra. Yes, prince, known and approved by Vasishṭha, Vāmadeva, and the others.

Bharata. Ah, they indeed are witnesses of three worlds. I am happy

that your Majesty has done no wrong. Mother, I spoke hard words to you in anger from affection for my brother, please forgive all that. Mother, I salute you.

Kaikeyī. Ah, child, what mother but forgives a son's offence? Nay, rise. How are you to blame?

Bharata. I thank you. Now must I take leave of your Majesty. This very day must I mobilize all the forces of the kingdom to help my noble brother. Now will I

Darken the coast with raging elephants and cover it with
camps of my army's multitudes. With my battalions crossing
over will I impose an equal lassitude on the ocean and on
Rāvaṇa. (16)

Aha, some noise, it seems. Find out quickly what it is.

[*Enter Portress.*]

Portress. Greeting, prince! On hearing this news the first queen has fainted away.

Kaikeyī. Ah!

Bharata. What, has my mother fainted?

Kaikeyī. Come, my son, let us comfort the noble lady.

Bharata. As my mother bids.

[*Exeunt omnes.*]

END OF THE SIXTH ACT.

ACT VII

INTERLUDE

[*The Scene is at Janasthāna.*]

[*Enter an Ascetic.*]

Ascetic. Nandilaka! Nandilaka!

[*Enter Nandilaka.*]

Nandilaka. Here I am, sir.

Ascetic. The chief of the hermitage sends word that his Highness Rāma has arrived, beautiful as the moon shining in the clear autumnal sky. He has slain Rāvaṇa, that put the three worlds to flight and stole away his wife and put on the throne Vibhishana, adorned with crowds of virtues, the very opposite of crowds of demons. He is bringing the Lady Sitā with him, pure and chaste as the gods, as seers divine and perfected saints; and around him are the chiefs of the bears, the demons, and the monkeys. So everything that can be thought of must be got ready in our hermitage to-day to the best of our resources.

Nandilaka. Everything is ready, sir, but—

Ascetic. But what?

Nandilaka. There are these demons of Vibhīṣaṇa's. About their food—the chief himself knows best.

Ascetic. Why so?

Nandilaka. But they eat . . .

Ascetic. Don't get flurried. Vibhīṣaṇa will look after the demons.

Nandilaka. All honour to that excellent demon. [*Exit.*]

Ascetic. [*Looking round.*] Ah here is his Highness Rāma.

The lord of men steps down to the ground from his aerial car.

Numerous kindly sages laud him crying 'Victory, best of men!

Vanquished be any second foe! May all the earth be subject to thy single rule.' (1)

Greeting, Highness, greeting. [*Exit.*]

END OF THE INTERLUDE.

[*Enter Rāma.*]

Rāma. Rāvaṇa have I slain for all his host and valour, regaining Sītā ever pure, endowed with all the virtues in the world, and now fulfilling to the very end my parent's word I have come once more to the hermitage of the saints. (2)

The Lady of Mithilā went within to greet the ladies of the hermitage and tarries there. [*Catching sight of her.*] Ah, there she is.

King Janaka's daughter moves slowly on while the sage's wives converse with her and call her 'Sītā', 'Dear', or 'Jānakī' according to their age, or still more loving 'daughter'. (3)

[*Enter Sītā and a female ascetic.*]

Female Ascetic. Why, here is your husband. Go up to him. I cannot bear to see you alone.

Sītā. Ah! Even to-day it seems too good to be true. [*Going up to Rāma.*] Greeting, my lord!

Rāma. Maithilī, do you remember we used to dwell in Janasthāna? Do you recognize these trees, your fosterlings?

Sītā. Yes, yes, I see. But then every leaf was visible and now one must look up at them.

Rāma. Quite so. Time produces ups and downs. Do you recollect, Maithilī, that under this tree¹ a herd of deer was startled on seeing Bharata dressed in white?

Sītā. Yes, my lord, I remember very well.

Rāma. And here is the great tortoise that witnessed our austerities.

¹ *Sapta-parṇa* = *Alstonia scholaris*.

We were sitting here, thinking of the oblations to be made for my beloved father, when we saw the golden deer.

Sītā. Oh, my lord, don't speak of it, pray don't. [*Trembles with fear.*]

Rāma. Calm your fears. That time is past. [*Looking at the sky.*]

Ah, what is this?

Dust is rising yellow as *lodhra* flowers and, carried along by the breeze, completely veils the sky. The blare of conches reverberating with the deafening din of kettledrums makes this forest as noisy as a city. (4)

[*Enter Lakshmaṇa.*]

Lakshmaṇa. My noble brother, greeting!

Here with the queens and a large army comes Bharata, so devoted to his brothers and eager for the sight of you. (5)

Rāma. Dear Lakshmaṇa, has Bharata arrived?

Lakshmaṇa. Yes, my brother.

Rāma. Lady of Mithilā, open wide your eyes to gaze on Bharata in the vanguard of the queens.

Sītā. Bharata, my lord, has come at a happy time.

[*Enter Bharata accompanied by the queens.*]

Bharata. I have come to-day with a contented mind and followed by my people, intent to see my elder brother with his noble spouse, released from calamities dire and prolonged, like the clear autumnal moon released from clouds. (6)

Rāma. Mothers, I salute you.

Queens. My child, long life to you. We are fortunate indeed to see you in good health with your wife at the fulfilment of your vow.

Rāma. I thank you.

Lakshmaṇa. Mothers, I salute you.

Queens. My child, long life to you.

Lakshmaṇa. I thank you.

Sītā. Ladies, respectfully I greet you.

Queens. Long may you be happy, child.

Sītā. Thank you.

Bharata. Noble brother, I salute you. I am Bharata.

Rāma. Come hither, dear prince of the Ikshvāku clan. Long life and health be thine!

Spread out thy breast as wide as the panel of a door and embrace me in thy two stalwart arms. Lift up this face lovely as the autumn moon, bring delight to this my body burnt by calamity. (7)

Bharata. I thank you. Lady, Bharata salutes you.

Sītā. Long may you be the companion of my lord.

Bharata. I thank you. Brother, I salute you.

Lakshmaṇa. Come to me, dear boy, long life be yours. Embrace me tightly. [*Embraces him.*]

Bharata. Thanks. Noble brother, now accept the burden of the State.

Rāma. But why, dear boy?

Kaikeyī. My son, I have long cherished this desire.

[*Enter Śatrughna.*]

Śatrughna. My mind is hurrying to see my elder brother, Rāvaṇa's destroyer, troubled by various misfortunes, while the lustre of his virtues remained untroubled. (8)

[*Approaching.*] Noble brother, I, Śatrughna, salute you!

Rāma. Come, dear boy. Long life and health be thine.

Śatrughna. I thank you. Lady, I salute you.

Sītā. Long life, my dear.

Śatrughna. Thank you. Brother, I salute you.

Lakshmaṇa. Long life and health be thine.

Śatrughna. Thanks. Noble brother, Vasishṭha and Vāmadeva here have come with the people and all preparation for the inauguration. They desire to see you.

Holy water from many a river and stream have the sages brought themselves by thy favour. Hosts of sages wish to see thy face anointed this first time like a lotus with drops of dew. (9)

Kaikeyī. Go, my son, receive the consecration.

Rāma. As my mother bids. [*Exit.*]

[*Voices behind the scene.*]

Victory! Victory to our lord! Victory to our king! Victory to his Majesty! Hail to thee of blessed mien! Hail, noble sir! Hail, destroyer of Rāvaṇa!

Kaikeyī. The priests and chamberlains are raising the cries of victory for my son and honour him with blessings.

Sumitrā. The people, the attendants and his kinsfolk celebrate the triumph of my son.

[*Voice behind the scene.*]

Ho, ye ascetics dwelling in Janasthāna, hearken, hearken, I say! As the sun smiteth the darkness with his mighty rays, so hath Rāma smitten the murky mass of enemies unparalleled and having rescued Sītā free from every harm, Rāma the delight of all mankind is Victor of the Earth. (10)

Kaikeyī. Ah, good! There rises the paeon of my son's victory.

[*Enter Rāma newly consecrated and his retinue.*]

Rāma. [*Looking up into the air.*] Dear Father.

Even in the other world be thou now content and relinquish all thy wretchedness. The thing thou didst desire for me has come to pass. Here am I king of the earth, bearer of a noble burden, and I have assumed the protection of the people in accordance with the Law. (11)

Bharata. I can never tire of gazing at my noble elder brother now entitled king, with the umbrella of state borne above him, with a coruscating diadem. Sprinkled with the holy water, he has attained the royal grace and is adored by myriads of people like the crescent moon. (12)

Śatrughna. By this consecration of my elder brother my house has lost its stain. The world shines bright again, as at the rising of the moon. (13)

Rāma. Dear Lakshmaṇa, I am invested with the sovereignty.

Lakshmaṇa. My felicitations! [*Enter Chamberlain.*]

Chamberlain. Victory to his Majesty! King Vibhīṣhaṇa sends a message of congratulations, so do Sugrīva, Nila, Mainda, Jāmbavat, Hanumat and others in their train; 'By good fortune you have won.'

Rāma. Say, rather, by the favour of my comrades.

Chamberlain. As the king commands.

Kaikeyī. Blessed indeed am I! I wish I could see this happiness in Ayodhyā.

Rāma. Your ladyship shall see it soon. [*Looking round.*] Why, all this wood looks as radiant as the sun. [*Reflecting.*] Ah, I have it! This is Pushpaka, the aerial car of Rāvaṇa, arrived in the sky. This time was fixed and it comes at the mere thought of it. Let every one get into the car. [*They all do so.*]

Rāma. To-day shall I go to Ayodhyā city accompanied by friends and kin.

Lakshmaṇa. To-day shall the citizens see thee ascendant like the moon with the stars. (14)

EPILOGUE

As Rāma was united with Janaka's daughter and his kin, so may our king rule the earth in conjunction with the goddess of beauty and prosperity. (15)

Exeunt omnes.

FINIS.

